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THE WRONG DRUG WAR

About half the current drug crisis is a crisis of U.S. foreign policy. The United States faces a powerful armed insurgency in Colombia. These are capitalist, not communist, insurgents, but their challenge to Washington's power is real. They are anti-imperialist capitalists—an unlikely but not illogical combination.

The other half of the crisis is due to the ravages of crack capitalism. The urban poor who suffer from a chemical dependence on crack suffer even more from an economic dependence on drug capitalism. The problem is that there's often no alternative.

President George Bush's speech and the Democratic response missed both points. Bush proposes spending a little more money to do a little more of everything: rehabilitate, interdict, enforce the law. He wants to expand U.S. intervention in the Colombian economy, and he won't rule out sending U.S. troops to do it. He proposes nothing to stimulate commerce in slum neighborhoods that would compete with the cash rewards of crack. Senator Joseph Biden's response was more militaristic in tone and almost equally indifferent to social and economic realities.

The indiscriminate hysteria over drugs, notes Barbara Ehrenreich in *Fear of Falling*, barely conceals deeper fears. "'Drugs,' as an undifferentiated category, symbolize the larger and thoroughly legal consumer culture, with its addictive appeal and harsh consequences for those who cannot keep up or default on their debts. . . . The entire market, the expanding spectacle of consumer possibilities, has us in its grip, and because that is too large and nameless, we turn our outrage toward something that is both less powerful and more concrete." Until both parties deal with the underlying economic malaise their drug policies will be a bad trip.

BUNK AS HISTORY
Christopher Hitchens

'DOI MOI' IN VIETNAM
Eric Scigliano

DOWN AND OUT IN SUBURBIA
Brad Kessler

CANON CULTURE
Lillian S. Robinson

ARE DEFICITS GOOD OR BAD?
Robert Pollin

CHILDREN WITH AIDS
Ronald Bayer

JACKSON ACTION

STRATEGIES FOR NOW—AND NEXT TIME

ANDREW KOPKIND

Jesse Jackson does not stop running. In the year since he sought the Democratic presidential nomination, he has barely missed a day on public view or a chance for extending his sway. The national media no longer see the Jackson story that was so dazzling in 1988, but the locals still love him. Every night he is on the TV news somewhere, and in the morning in the headlines, marching with the masses, exhorting schoolchildren, supporting strikers, eulogizing fallen comrades, considering his options, circumnavigating the globe, parleying with world leaders and cajoling politicians in the promotion of his many projects.

Jackson is not exactly running for office, but he is working the crowds in a kind of generic political campaign that may at any time assume electoral form. It is hardly a secret that he would like a shot at the District of Columbia mayoralty, which comes up next year. To that end, he moved his residence from Chicago to Washington this summer, and he is cagily watching to see if beleaguered Mayor Marion Barry, who has Jackson's promise not to oppose his re-election, will run again. Jackson has certainly not ruled out another presidential bid, although some advisers argue that 1992 may not be the optimum time for it. "Jackson gets three at-bats," one mused recently. "After the next one, he's out of the game."

Meanwhile, Jackson continues to advance the causes of the several constituencies of the Rainbow Coalition as well as (*Continued on Page 313*)

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LETTERS.

C.L.R. JAMES REMEMBERED

Los Angeles

Christopher Hitchens, in his "Minority Report" dated July 3, perpetuates a number of misconceptions about the life and work of C.L.R. James. First and foremost of those is the idea that Jimmy (as his American comrades knew C.L.R.) was a "pure thinker" and not primarily a revolutionary Marxist intent on the overthrow of the existing order, whether it be Washington, Moscow, Beijing or even his native Trinidad. It is because of this misunderstanding that Hitchens can refer to Jimmy as having been "condemned" to spend fifteen years in the United States in the left, where there was no "definite gain in politics or organization."

In fact, quite the opposite is the case. It was in the United States that he—having grown up in the Third World and having absorbed the best the European intellectual tradition had to offer both in Trinidad and in England—engaged with the working class in the New World. It was here that he, along with others, began a complete reexamination of Marxism, formed an organization called the Johnson-Forest Tendency (J.R. Johnson was his nom de guerre) and brought the Marxist theory of organization up to date through an analysis of what working-class struggle had forced capital to become internationally: state capitalism. He did this not by sitting in a library, though no doubt that happened on occasion too, but by immersing himself in the day-to-day life and struggles of black Americans and other working-class people.

The new theoretical work was always translated into practical politics, which inevitably means into organization. This was perhaps the most creative and important work he did, and it is the least known, for reasons that must be discussed at another time. His argument with Trotsky in 1939 in favor of the validity of an independent black movement soon became part and parcel of Johnson-Forest's rejection of the vanguard party and opened up the theoretical possibility for an independent women's movement. It immediately made possible Selma James's *A Woman's Place*, published in 1953, the first real exposition of the ongoing rebellion of American working-class women against work inside and outside the home.

People are perhaps not aware that Jimmy wrote a popular pamphlet during World War II titled "Why Negroes Should Oppose the War"; or that during that same war he helped organize the first strike of sharecroppers in southeast Missouri, where the F.B.I. and the Communist Party came looking for him together!

C.L.R. James was never in or near the Communist Party. He never considered the Comintern to be "close friends and allies," especially since they were killing his friends and comrades in Spain and even in Paris. During the 1930s George Padmore, then the head of the Third World section of the Comintern, would have considered Jimmy to be a mortal enemy—which does not in any way detract from the great work that Padmore did after leaving the C.P. James and Padmore did not start their collaboration until after Padmore broke with the Comintern and was himself persecuted by it. Jimmy was not simply "the severest and bravest Third World polemicist against Stalinism" but the bravest and best anywhere because he and his organization saw Stalinism as an international phenomenon, not a Soviet or Communist Party peculiarity.

Paul Buhle turns reality upside down with the title of his biography: To paraphrase Errol McLeod, president of the Trinidad Oilfields Workers Trade Union when he spoke at Jimmy's funeral, C.L.R. James was not the Artist as Revolutionary; he was the revolutionary as author, the revolutionary as literary critic, the revolutionary as cricket correspondent, the revolutionary as pan-Africanist . . . and I would add the revolutionary as organizer. He cannot be reduced to a European intellectual who happened to be from Trinidad.

Sam Weinstein
(Stepson of C.L.R. James)

BLUE CHIPS AND BLUE COLLARS

New York City

The August 21/28 editorial "Tax the Big Casino" begins sensibly, if unoriginally, by attacking Bush's proposed capital gains tax cut as fairy tale supply-siderism. It then proposes a securities transactions tax, which is moderately interesting as a means to raise tax revenues. The two reasons adduced in favor of the idea are, however, dubious.

You claim, first, that a securities transactions tax would be "almost all of it paid by the very rich." Not so. The majority of securities in U.S. capital markets are owned by the middle class or the working class, chiefly through pension funds and other such institutional investors. As a form of taxation on indirect income, the proposal merits attention. But a tax that takes its bite out of pension funds representing investment against the future and, thereby, out of the future income of people who will someday be fixed-income retirees is a questionable social policy. It is surely wiser to enact a tax that curtails *current* consumption by those same people.

In any case, by misrepresenting where the true burden of the tax falls, which is squarely on the middle class, you engage, from the opposite direction, in the equivalent of Bush's voodoo economics. Taxing securities trades does not, to use your phrase, invent Santa Claus. Moreover, if the point of such a tax is simply to raise revenues generally, then it is downright dumb to incur the sizable costs required to create a regulatory regime for collecting the new tax when a simple hike in existing rates, within the existing machinery, would accomplish the same thing. Why not call for a return to progressivity and higher rates and have done with it?

Of course, you had a second purpose in mind by proposing a securities transactions tax: to make the capital markets, in Keynes's phrase, "inaccessible and expensive." Insofar as revenue-raising is not the issue, then, you simply assert that it would be socially useful to raise—gratuitously—the price of allocating capital to production. The idea is to deter speculation in the capital markets, although that activity is notoriously hard to separate from "legitimate" investment.

Keynes was no friend of pointless inefficiency. There are important tax policy changes that would reform the capital markets; the most obvious is eliminating the tax advantages of debt over equity. But the broader point is simply that serious injustice in the distribution of this society's goods will not be remedied by making all of those goods more expensive to produce.

Kenneth Anderson

BUSH'S COPYCAT

Pahoa, Hawaii

While I agree with Christopher Hitchens ["Minority Report," May 8] that Auden's poem "September 1, 1939" was the "half-remembered" source from which Peggy Noonan must have stolen her image for Bush's inane "thousand points of light," I think that may be only half her purloining (or half-remembering).

The other half appears to come from *The War Diaries of Jean-Paul Sartre, September 1939–March 1940*:

> Melted the rustlings of light under the dead trees
> In water the thousand lights of water that hid their name
> Melted the pure salt of winter, my hands wither
> I twist between my hands the greasy wadding of the sky
> Melted the needles of white joy in my heart.

Auden's "ironic points of light" plus Sartre's "thousand lights of water" provide a dual source for Noonan's inspiration without technically plagiarizing. And as Hitchens pointed out, with Auden's poem so also with Sartre's, the original provides a better precept, however esoteric, than the caricature.

Maja Gossom

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Exxon Oil Slick

"You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."
—Joni Mitchell

Exxon told its credit-card holders recently that "progress has been good" in the cleanup of Alaska's Prince William Sound since the tanker Valdez ran aground March 24, spilling 11 million gallons of oil. "Essentially all the oil on the water had been removed or had dissipated" by mid-May, Exxon says; rehabilitated sea otters are being returned to the ocean; "fish have escaped immediate harm"; and "the rate of progress is increasing" on the shoreline cleanup. "We will not be satisfied until the cleanup is complete," the company intoned. In fact, with wintry weather expected soon, Exxon has announced its intention to stop work in mid-September—when we are sure to be told in further detail of the mighty corporation's valiant struggle to save the sound.

Unfortunately, virtually every assertion by the company is an outright lie or a deliberate distortion. The ugly slicks may be gone, but nobody knows just how much of the oil has formed clumps and sunk below the water's surface. Some scientists on the scene believe that at least half the

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poisonous aromatic hydrocarbons found in crude oil have dissolved in the water. Such compounds may take up to fifty years to decompose—and no one is certain what their effects will be on the food chain. The heroic efforts of Exxon rescuers and volunteers may have given TV crews some heartwarming footage, but it is likely that half the sound's otter population of 6,000 to 10,000 was wiped out.

The word "cleanup" cannot possibly be applied to the effects of high-pressure water sprays and oil skimmers on 730 miles of spoiled shoreline. (Had the spill occurred on the East Coast it would have stretched from Cape Cod to Chesapeake Bay.) According to Charles Wohlforth of the *Anchorage Daily News*, "The oil . . . [has] easily defeated the workers' efforts." Buried under the beaches' rocks to a depth of several feet, it seeps to the surface again with each tide. Restoring the shoreline to pre-spill conditions would be "impossible without dismantling the wilderness," Wohlforth reports. Instead, as Exxon president William Stevens told Congress in July, the company's goal is to treat "heavily and moderately oiled shoreline segments" until they are at "a stable level." In plain English, that means helping the oil solidify into asphalt. On Green Island, Wohlforth reports, on what was declared a clean beach back in July, the air "smells of a freshly tarred school roof. . . . A beach of fine gravel is glued together into a single, hard pavement." They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.

Back in July, the State of Alaska asked the company to continue to treat beaches and maintain floating booms through the winter, but Exxon refused. It has spent about $600 million (12 percent of its 1988 profits) on the "cleanup," but we have to wonder whether the operation hasn't been just an expensive public relations exercise to protect against charges of negligence. The State of Alaska has sued Exxon and Alyeska (the consortium of oil companies that runs the trans-Alaska pipeline) for damages and asked for an injunction to insure that the cleanup is continued. Various environmental groups have also brought suit, hoping to extract from Exxon enough money to set up an independently controlled fund to restore Prince William Sound and acquire compensatory natural resources where restoration is impossible. But Exxon stands to pay only if negligence is proved, which is why the company is taking care to look "responsible."

In addition to triple damage fines, the Federal Clean Water and Clean Harbor Act provides for felony charges and possible jail terms for corporate officers. Indeed, there are rumors that Attorney General Richard Thornburgh has begun a preliminary investigation. But so far, only the Exxon boycott campaign—a loosely organized effort shouldered by Ralph Nader's Essential Information—has caused Exxon any direct pain. The Valdez disaster has of course energized the fight against development of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and increased opposition to Federal leasing of offshore drilling rights nationwide. But if future Valdezes are to be deterred, Congress and the public must demand much tougher enforcement of standing environmental laws, rescind the tax deduction for cleanup expenses and mandate larger penalties that will make pollution truly bad for business.

The Two Racisms

The racially motivated murder of Yusuf Hawkins, a 16-year-old New Yorker, symbolizes the continuing and bitter crisis in American race relations. More poignant, his death is a dangerous point along the tortuous trajectory of New York's racial problem.

Young Hawkins was murdered on August 23, in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, a predominantly Italian blue-collar neighborhood. He and three friends went there to meet the owner of an automobile that one of them hoped to purchase. En route they walked past the apartment of 18-year-old Gina Feliciano, who shortly before had severed a relationship with 18-year-old Keith Mondello and was now reputedly dating blacks and Latinos. Mondello was allegedly seeking revenge on Feliciano's date for her birthday party.

At least ten and perhaps as many as thirty youths, including Mondello, gathered in front of Feliciano's apartment, apparently unaware that she had canceled her party because of threats of trouble. As Hawkins and his friends approached, four shots were fired; Hawkins, hit twice in the chest, died shortly afterward. To lend absurdity to the tragedy, Hawkins was not Feliciano's new suitor.

In a year already marked by new rioting in Miami over a black man murdered by police and by steadily increasing racial violence on college campuses, Hawkins's senseless death is a forceful reminder of America's unresolved racist history, and the circumstances of the murder are rife with the iconography of New York's racial antipathy: baseball bats wielded by several of the white youths; the mostly black marches of protest in the aftermath, and the controversial police tactics in one of them. Those who deemed Spike Lee's portrayal of the deep divide between Italians and African-Americans in his film *Do the Right Thing* to be overdrawn, art intimidating life as it were, have now been tragically rebutted.

The ready temptation is to view the troubling escalation of racial violence in tightly turfed, blue-collar communities like Bensonhurst as isolated from other varieties of racism. Admittedly several factors intensify racism's violent expression in white working-class communities. For one, there is the machismo-laden bonding process fostered through loosely associated groups of young men. These gangs commit random acts of racial violence in retaliation against a perceived invasion of their turf by blacks or other minorities. Also, a generation removed from the immediate social, historical and political background of the civil rights movement, these white youths find white supremacist groups like the Klan, the boot boys and the skinheads appealing. Their racist message, coupled with the older generation's resentment of the limited racial progress that *has* been made, renders the white youths devoid of a sense of why strategies like affirmative action were developed. Furthermore, the dislocation of many blue-collar whites within the economy, with its shift from manufacturing to service employment, means that there is intense intraclass as well as racial conflict, especially in competition for low-skilled, high-wage jobs.

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However, while racism is perhaps most violently expressed in blue-collar communities, both its logic and life are sustained across class lines. Racism is embedded and expressed in the classroom by racist teachers and professors; in the white-collar workplace by career ceilings on black managers; in the judicial system in recent Supreme Court attacks on the spirit of affirmative action; in housing by the ongoing real estate practice of "steering"; in local government (New York City Mayor Edward Koch's racial insensitivity stands out); and for most of this decade by national policies under Reaganism. What occurred in Bensonhurst, and in Howard Beach before it, is the conspicuous harvest of the seeds of bigotry sowed in a thousand insidiously subtle gestures of racial antagonism, insensitivity and resentment. Our task, in formulating strategies of resistance, is to understand the relationship between the two racisms. In so doing, we help reveal how racism's violent, working-class expression is linked to, and nourished by, its less visible but just as vicious middle- and upper-class counterparts. Otherwise, Yusuf Hawkins's tragic death will have been in vain.

MICHAEL ERIC DYSON

Michael Eric Dyson teaches ethics and cultural criticism at Chicago Theological Seminary and writes the "Black America" column for Zeta.

Health Kick

Since early August nearly 200,000 telephone workers have been on strike against Nynex, Bell Atlantic, Pacific Telesis and Ameritech rather than give up their comprehensive health benefits. The reason for their persistence is obvious to anyone who has worried about the rising cost of health care, but *The New York Times* didn't get the message. "The root of this conflict," the paper explained, "is Federal tax policy that subsidizes lavish fringe benefits." Since medical insurance is the equivalent of thousands of dollars of a worker's annual income, the argument goes, unions in effect lower their members' taxes when they negotiate higher benefits rather than higher wages. *The Times* therefore advised, "The strike amplifies the need for a sharp limit on the health benefit tax deduction." In other words, if workers were taxed on the value of their health benefits, they wouldn't be demanding the fullest and most expensive coverage.

This is nonsense: economics stripped of its human context. What the strike "amplifies" is the need for a national health program. The problem for telephone workers, as for all Americans, is that realistically they have no alternative to employer-sponsored coverage. Premiums for medical insurance have been rising by 15 percent a year, and "first-dollar" medical coverage plans, in which the insurer pays 100 percent of most types of expenses, with no deductible, are out of reach for the average person. The United States spends nearly 12 percent of its gross national product on health care, but one in six citizens under age 65—37 million Americans—is uninsured. No country in the industrialized world devotes a larger portion of its resources to medical care; yet no industrialized country has denied a larger portion of its population access to such care.

So there is nothing complicated behind the workers' demands. If the union loses comprehensive health coverage, sick workers faced with a high deductible will be more likely to put off treatment. They will also be inclined to avoid regular visits to the doctor. At some point, however, neglect will take its toll and hospitalizations will result.

The telephone companies, meanwhile, argue as if the value of preventive medicine and early treatment were debatable. They contend that first-dollar coverage leads employees to "overutilize" the system and incorporates no incentives for minimizing costs. (They ignore the fact that nothing drives up insurance premiums faster than increased hospitalization.) The companies thus propose to "share" the burden of soaring health care costs with their employees. But shifting costs to workers solves nothing. Like the entire range of approaches experimented with in the past ten years, from health maintenance organizations to preferred provider systems (on August 20 workers at Pacific Telesis settled for the latter, linking them to a specific network of doctors and hospitals), it merely tinkers with the mechanisms of a system already wrecked.

Even some of the most ardent capitalists recognize this. The U.S. medical system, says Walter Maher, director of employee benefits for the Chrysler Corporation, is "broke, both literally and figuratively." To fix it, says Jack Shelton, manager of employee insurance at the Ford Motor Company, "there needs to be some national strategy." Capital's interest in national health care has culminated in the formation of the Washington Business Group on Health, which represents Chrysler, Ford and about 180 other Fortune 500 companies. It is currently drawing up a national health care plan. While business is not motivated by benevolence, some corporations realize that the push and pull over health benefits will not go away with tax benefit schemes or managed-care strategies.

The current health care system has failed—in terms of both equity and efficiency. As this strike illustrates, the workers' interest is the public's interest. It must become the government's interest.

KATE CAGNEY

Kate Cagney is a writer and health care advocate who lives in Chicago.

ASLEEP ON THE CHINA WATCH

"I am deeply impressed by the interest and friendliness of Americans toward the Chinese people, but I am appalled by their lack of knowledge about us."

—Wang Meng, "Things I Like About America"
The Nation, March 22, 1986

Wang was deposed as China's Minister of Culture after the Tiananmen Square uprising, which no U.S. Sinologist predicted.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

There are two ways in which the city of Washington discloses its contempt for the life of the mind. The first is in its general bovine indifference to ideas and theories and to anything else that doesn't assimilate to "the bottom line." The second is in its occasional, febrile enthusiasm for a crackpot hypothesis. Usually, the crackpot hypothesis consists of some thunderously empty historical generalization. One thinks of James Burnham's arm-waving about "the struggle for the world" and the need for an imperial America, or Walt Rostow's mediocre essay *Stages of Economic Growth*, which amounted to a dull pedagogic guide through imaginary metamorphoses until the whole world tasted the joys of capitalist "take-off." (This flight has been indefinitely postponed.)

Now, it's Mr. Hegel Goes to Washington. Francis Fukuyama, deputy director of the State Department's policy planning staff and by his own admission a former analyst at the Rand Corporation, has delivered himself of a paper called "The End of History?" (Love the question mark.) Printed first in the neoconservative review *The National Interest*, it has since attracted generous space in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and has ignited a saturnalia among the pseudo-intellectuals. This may be partly because his thesis is so easy to summarize:

> The century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: not to an "end of ideology" or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as earlier predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism.

Or, to state the same generalization in a different way:

> What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, *but the end of history as such*: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. [Emphasis added.]

Having thus conscripted our attention, Fukuyama does a brief *tour d'horizon* to show, proudly, that everybody in the world wants to be just like "us." Citing Hegel, who ill-advisedly announced the end of history following Napoleon's victory at Jena in 1806, he shows that he knows nothing of Marx by alleging that the latter plagiarized Hegel to argue that history would end in "a communist utopia that would finally resolve all prior contradictions." Wisely, perhaps, he avoids citation here. Yet, borrowing from Hegel's modern disciple Alexandre Kojève, he asserts:

> Surely, the class issue has actually been successfully resolved in the West. As Kojève (among others) noted, the egalitarianism of modern America represents the essential achievement of the classless society envisioned by Marx.

One rolls this round the tongue like a splendid rare vintage. At last, self-congratulation raised to the status of philosophy! The Bush years have found their Burke, or their Pangloss. Fukuyama even borrows from Burke, unconsciously and without irony, when he writes that the post-historical world will replace "daring, courage, imagination, and idealism" with "economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems." And in case any of you were so crass as to mention the obvious out-groups:

> For our purposes, it matters very little what strange thoughts occur to people in Albania or Burkina Faso, for we are interested in what one could in some sense call the common ideological heritage of mankind.

Oh we are, are we? What does Fukuyama leave out of his account? There is not one word on the economy of war for one thing, or on the national security state. It may be true that millions of people across the globe now yearn for the standard of living enjoyed by the American middle class, but the very existence of this standard, which is flaunted with the same lack of consideration as Fukuyama brings to the study of history, is creating a historic crisis of expectations. When the dogged assembly workers of the Asian periphery begin to get the idea that they could consume what they now merely produce, we may see some action of the sort that would not have surprised Marx, or perhaps even Hegel. But will the "emerging nations" be able even to dream of replicating the American paradigm without captive markets of their own and without a vast military budget to close the production-consumption gap? On the political side will they accept the rule of an unaccountable military and espionage caste as meekly as we do?

As for the irrelevant, small nations that Fukuyama dismisses with the same ease as his turn-of-the-century predecessors did Serbia, does he consider Syria and Lebanon and Israel to be in transition to a more modern, streamlined, "problem-solving" style? If not, then what *does* he think about America's largest single foreign policy commitment? And does he see the new narcotized, militarized relationship between the United States and the Andean countries as an exchange of raw materials for democratic, liberal principles? His essay is clueless on these points.

Making much of a "victory" in the cold war, which is to say that any fool can declare an end to a conflict the scope of which he vastly exaggerated in the first place, Fukuyama addresses a feverish ode to the joys of the free market. But wasn't it the "market" faction that cleared Tiananmen Square? And isn't it the Rumanian regime, chief skunk among the nations of Eastern Europe, that has the best relationship with the liberal-democratic bankers and their punitive repayment schemes?

It's not possible that a solipsistic clown like Fukuyama is history's last word. For his hubris, let's remind him what Marx actually did say about a certain bogus Hegelian school:

> In its spiritual pride it has reduced the entire process of history to the relation between the rest of the world—which falls under the category of "the mass"—and itself. . . . It has demonstrated its own excellence against the stupidity of the masses and has finally announced the critical *last judgement*. . . . This is a procedure with a completely uncritical attitude toward itself.

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Class Reunion

EDWARD SOREL

FEELS ODD BEING BACK ON CAMPUS AFTER ALL THESE YEARS
REMEMBER HOW WE COULDN'T STAND EACH OTHER?
WELL, YOU WERE A MEMBER OF YOUNG AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM!
AND YOU WERE A MEMBER OF S.D.S.!
YOU KEPT YELLING THAT MAO WAS JUST ANOTHER COMMIE MEGALOMANIAC
YOU WERE CERTAIN NIXON WOULD ALIGN HIMSELF WITH FASCIST CRAZIES.
AND YOU WERE CERTAIN THAT CASTRO DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT DEMOCRACY OR HUMAN RIGHTS
AND YOU SAID THE C.I.A. WANTED TO INSTALL A NEO-NAZI REGIME IN CHILE
I REMEMBER YOU SAYING THAT COMMUNISM WAS INCAPABLE OF PROVIDING A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING
AND YOU PREDICTING THAT OUR COMMUNIST PARANOIA WOULD BANKRUPT THE COUNTRY IN TWENTY YEARS
HARD TO BELIEVE BUT...
IT APPEARS WE BOTH WERE RIGHT ABOUT EVERYTHING!
Edward Sorel

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ARTICLES.

VIETNAM'S ECONOMIC RENEWAL

Doi Moi, Hold The *Glasnost*

ERIC SCIGLIANO

When the Chinese People's Liberation Army stormed Tiananmen Square on June 4, Vietnam abstained from the world chorus of condemnation, though three days later it issued a cautious statement that it "deplored the bloodshed." Such discretion is traditional for the Vietnamese, who for centuries safeguarded their autonomy by flattering their giant neighbor to the north. But Vietnam's own internal tensions also give it reason to be wary about endorsing democratic revolutions in neighboring socialist countries. With less fanfare, and so far less conspicuous success, its leaders have been following a path similar to China's, trying to transform their moribund economy to an incentive model while refraining from the sort of massive political reformation undertaken by the Soviet Union.

No one openly contests the need for *doi moi* ("economic renewal"). Fourteen years after the conquest of Saigon made Vietnam one nation, and more than ten years after its invasion of Cambodia made it an international pariah, the country is in desperate straits. Despite rich mineral, petroleum and agricultural resources and a relatively educated and famously industrious work force, Vietnam remains one of the poorest of countries, with per capita income an estimated $160 a year.

"We made war on the prices," after defeating the United States, quipped Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach while making a pitch for reconciliation and free trade to yet another American delegation (which included this writer) last January. "And we have been defeated." Printing money by wishful edict sent inflation soaring to 1,000 percent last year. Though the rate has slowed since, inflation remains chronic; in late March, the Communist Party's Sixth Plenum Congress contradicted rosier official claims and conceded that slowing inflation was the nation's most urgent task. Workers in the official sector find their earnings so eroded they must start small businesses on the side, take second and even third jobs or rely on tips (if they have contact with foreigners) or bribes—thus further undermining productivity. Last year imports exceeded exports by a factor of three and the government ran a 30 percent budget deficit.

One oft-cited reason for Vietnam's impoverishment is the expense of maintaining an occupying army in Cambodia. But the direct cost is in fact less than it's often made out to be in the West. Soldiers receive little more than rice for sustenance, rounding out their diet by growing their own vegetables. The price of defending Cambodia is much higher, however, if the "opportunity costs" are included: billions of dollars in lost investment and assistance that the West, in particular the United States, has withheld while demanding a Vietnamese troop evacuation. (Before last month's breakdown in the Paris peace talks, Vietnam had promised to complete that withdrawal this month.)

The U.S. embargo blocks more than just American dollars. In 1987 the Honda Motor Corporation pulled back from building an assembly plant in Ho Chi Minh City for the little motorbikes that are the universal steeds of developing Asian countries, and which are now brought in from Thailand via Cambodia. Recapturing their assembly value would help Vietnam staunch the hemorrhage of precious hard currency. But the United States threatened sanctions against the Japanese, and the plan now languishes, on hold.

Meanwhile, massive projects on the old Soviet heavy-industrial model have proven to be boondoggles that operate at low capacity or not at all: a Soviet-built oil refinery, Vietnam's first, that could not accommodate the local high-paraffin petroleum; a Swedish-built pulp mill whose misconceived design the Swedes blame on the Vietnamese. The Russians seem less and less promising partners: They concede the wasteful misdirection of much of their aid, make no secret of their unwillingness to subsidize perpetually an Asian Cuba and cannot supply the technology Vietnam needs to join in the Pacific Rim boom.

Though it barely keeps pace with runaway population growth, food production has been an economic bright spot and is the first test of relaxation of state controls. The government pulled back from forced collectivization of the South; even in the North it contracts land out to farmers, allowing them to keep up to half their crops. It has also been putting land out to open bid, realizing, in the words of Do Loc Diep, deputy director of Hanoi's Institute of World Economics, that "the peasants work only when they benefit." The trouble is, that incentive also encourages production of large families, to work the fields and support the aged.

Even in nonagricultural sectors, liberalization is not a novel notion in Vietnam; the Socialist Republic has made fitful stabs at it since unification in 1975, including instituting a foreign-investment code (albeit an ineffectual one) in 1977. Its leaders chafe at the suggestion that they are only following their Soviet patrons' lead. "I would like to say *perestroika* is our export product," boasts Nguyen Xuan Oanh, the Harvard-educated economist who is now a main architect of and salesman for a resurgent free-market Vietnam. "We started way back in 1979. So Mr. Gorbachev has learned from us." That claim is not entirely fanciful; while still Agriculture Minister, Gorbachev attended Vietnam's Fifth Party Congress in 1982, at which *doi moi* was inaugurated.

After teaching at Harvard, working as an International Monetary Fund economist and serving as Acting Prime Minister in the Saigon government, Oanh was put under house arrest by the victorious Communists. Now he is General

Eric Scigliano, a senior editor at the Seattle Weekly, *spent parts of January and February in Vietnam.*

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Secretary Nguyen Van Linh's economic guru and the designated spokesman for the official gospel, "market-oriented socialism." As the urbane and irreverent Oanh (known to his Western friends as "Jack") says simply, "They needed someone who understood markets. We have tried long enough with the centrally planned formula, for thirteen years, and it has not worked."

Oanh makes no bones about what market-oriented socialism really means. "I could use the word 'capitalism,'" he says—if it weren't too politically loaded. Just as it took an anticommunist Nixon to go to China, "I leave it to the Communists to talk about 'the private sector.' This kind of switching of management is very risky."

At the top, as at the street level, *doi moi* gets near-unanimous endorsement. Even Premier Do Muoi, long perceived as a main opponent, now declares his support. Where, then, does the resistance, and the risk Oanh warns of, come from?

"From all the bureaucrats," says the vice chair of the Binh Tri Thien Province People's Committee. "The directors of state enterprises have been against the new policy from the beginning." Here, as in the Soviet Union, it is the midlevel functionaries who have the most to lose—sinecures, perks, bribes—to the produce-or-perish edicts; some have even received death sentences in recent prosecutions for corruption. Economic reform threatens not just personal privilege but the ingrained martial culture of a people that have been at war for nearly fifty years. Managers and officials (up to Linh himself) rose through a now-outmoded meritocracy according to their valor and skill at war rather than their ability to manage a peacetime economy.

It is more than desperation and hopeful theories that impel Vietnam to beat its swords into free-market plowshares. Oanh's star has risen on the tide of relative economic success that the eternally free-enterprising Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City has enjoyed while the more socialized North has stagnated. Ho Chi Minh City's leaders have bent or broken the rules since 1979, paring subsidies to inefficient state ventures, nurturing cooperatives and joint ventures, streamlining tax and permit hurdles and winking at semi-illicit free enterprise.

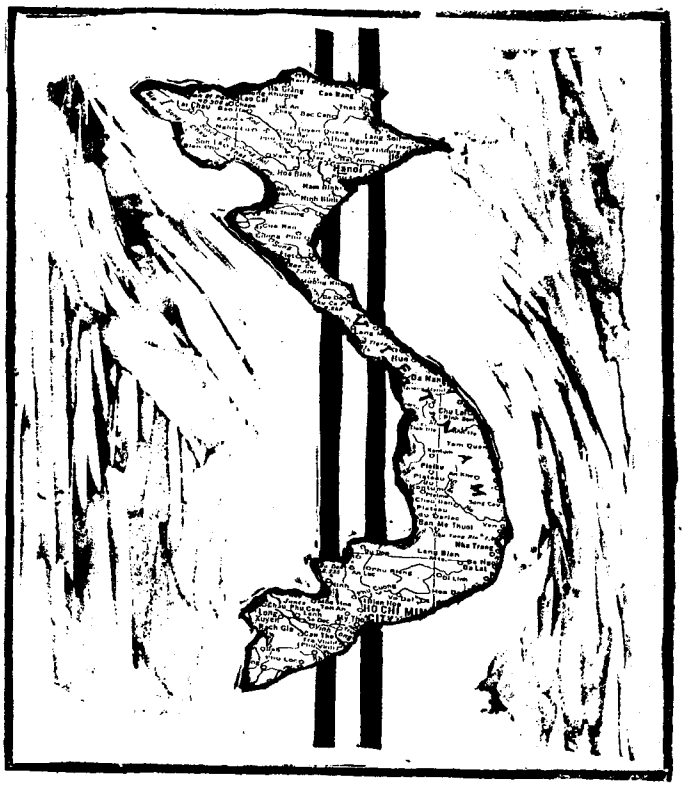
The result is evident in the discrepancy between the commercial life of Hanoi and that of Ho Chi Minh City (though this must also be credited to the more developed physical and financial infrastructures that survived from preliberation Saigon). Ho Chi Minh City's streets are full of well-stocked vendors carrying domestic and imported goods (some with U.S. stores tags still attached), and its Cholon district once again teems and bustles like any other mercantile Chinatown; more than 400 gold dealers returned to the open there as soon as the law relegitimized them.

Gray, quiet Hanoi's commerce lags far behind Ho Chi Minh City's, but is catching up fast. Modest retail, repair and craftsmen's shops now fill what were shuttered street fronts. "You must understand how far they have come," notes one veteran European diplomat. "Ninety percent of these shops weren't here four years ago." Next to his home, a backyard private factory makes efficient, inexpensive rice mills of its own invention, testimony that productive innovation as well as debt-based imports can serve consumer needs.

After outlasting the North's suspicions, the South's reformers were embraced by the national leadership, and then rose to the top of it. Ho Chi Minh City party boss Linh was reinstated in the Politburo in 1985 and installed as General Secretary the next year, bringing Oanh, Deputy Premier and chief economic planner Vo Van Kiet and other reformers with him. After a heated, remarkably open debate the Sixth Party Congress in 1986 declared a sea change in economic direction, away from central planning and large-scale industrialization and toward a market economy built on Vietnam's natural strengths in agriculture and labor-intensive production. This agenda was shored up with a liberal investment code instituted last year, which set up terms not only for contractual and joint ventures but for entirely foreign-owned enterprises as well.

Vietnam has since licensed over four dozen ventures based on foreign investment, together worth about a half-billion dollars. About half that has gone to offshore oil and gas exploration by Dutch, Belgian, French, British and Indian companies. In February, representatives of three U.S. oil companies were also in Vietnam to check out the prospects—though with the United States' stalling on normalization, they may find only crumbs left when they are finally allowed to sit at the table.

The government has also opened the door to a potentially immense grass-roots source of investment: the million-plus *Viet kieu*, or overseas Vietnamese, whose smuggled remittances are a main source of prosperity in the South. (Ask a Saigonite why he's riding a Honda instead of the usual bicycle and odds are he'll tell you about his family in the States.) *Viet kieu* have funded the partly private Saigon Bank of Industry and Commerce, which some predict will surpass



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the National Bank. Vietnam's first private university and hotel are also in the works, promising invigorating competition for still other official sectors.

Such competition is at the heart of *doi moi* and very much in keeping with the Vietnamese genius for institutional pluralism. No format is to be scrapped; rather, state, cooperative and private enterprises are to compete in the marketplace, and may the best system thrive. Money-losing state enterprises are ordered to turn a profit or be auctioned off.

The results so far are inconclusive; Vietnam's leadership admits that recalcitrant and incapable bureaucrats have stalled the implementation of reforms. And those reforms may threaten another, less privileged class: What will market-oriented socialism mean for a medical, social and welfare safety net that is now generous for (and a strain upon) a country of such meager means? Economic planners speak with the fervor of born-again supply-siders about the need to withdraw unaffordable supports in order to nurture production. "We realize now that only inequality means equality," says economist Do Duc Dinh of Hanoi's Institute of World Economics. At the same time, they look anxiously at the dislocation and insecurity that are the dark side of China's economic rejuvenation. At the institute I listened as they passionately debated the benefits and risks of the Chinese undertaking, returning again and again to the same question: Who will be the social "guarantor" when the state is no longer? I realized it was their own nation's prospects they were debating, using China as a surrogate.

And finally, there is the ominous example of Tiananmen Square. With *doi moi* has come a large measure of *tu do ngon luan* ("freedom of opinion") and *tu do bao chi* ("freedom of the press"). Vietnamese are now told they may speak and deal freely with foreigners, though some still glance about anxiously for the ubiquitous spies and informers of yesteryear. "Most travel restrictions have been abandoned," says Oanh, who last year was allowed to visit the United States for a tour, though applications to go abroad still proceed with excruciating slowness. And the lively and diverse party-sponsored presses of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City vigorously attack official corruption and mismanagement, without prior censorship.

In recent months, however, the authorities have begun to bear down on the upstart press. Last December, Nguyen Ngoc was ousted as editor of *Van Nghe*, the Vietnamese Writers Association's literary weekly, for publishing unflattering references to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century national heroes. *Tuoi Tre* and other papers rallied to Ngoc's cause, and the association planned to reconsider his ouster. But two months later, General Secretary Linh exhorted the media to balance criticism with "remedial" suggestions and recognition of "good models," reminding them that they are not just "the people's voice" but "also a tool of the party." At the March party plenum, he stated this warning more broadly, according to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*: "We do not allow those who take advantage of democracy and openness to attack the party and its leadership." The plenum communiqué reiterated that renovation meant "to apply creatively and develop, not to deviate from, the principles of Marxism-Leninism."

The usual interpretation is that Linh and the reformers are buying peace with party conservatives, and space for *doi moi*, by holding the line against the sort of political reforms that are sweeping the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary. They are thus following a sequence opposite to Gorbachev's: *perestroika* first, and hold the *glasnost*. That, however, is the route on which Deng has led China; there (as in South Korea and Taiwan) economic growth has only nurtured, not diverted, the hunger for democracy. □

THE HIDDEN HOMELESS

Down and Out In Suburbia

BRAD KESSLER

Elmsford, New York

"I never thought I'd be living in a Howard Johnson's," Roger Jones is telling me one bright morning in May while he looks out his picture window at a perfect Westchester County spring—the forsythia bushes in full bloom, the wooded hills, carpeted and kelly green, rolling westward out to the Hudson River. Roger is a black man in his late 20s who is dressed in sneakers and a windbreaker and has the clean-cut looks of a prep-school graduate. Married and with kids, he grew up in Elmsford, went to college, worked briefly on Wall Street and lived in Washington, D.C., before returning to his native Westchester. When he came back two years ago to the place that real estate developers like to call "Country Club Country" he couldn't find an affordable place to live and ended up, like thousands of others here, homeless.

I'm talking with Roger (not his real name) this morning at the Elmsford Motor Lodge. The motel was once, in a happier age, a Howard Johnson's, and there are still reminders of its HoJo past—the orange plastic pantiles, the robin's-egg-blue spire, the A-frame entrance hall. But the restaurant is now boarded up and the name has changed. The hallways are full of trash; the sounds of soap operas and children crying come from behind the closed doors, and ever since the motel became a kind of holding pen for a hundred of Westchester's homeless families, nobody here thinks about getting HoJo hotcakes in the morning or service with a smile.

Westchester County is not the type of place people think of when they talk about the homeless. Forty minutes north of New York City, it unfolds with sylvan parkways, lush corporate parks and towns with Anglican names like Ardsley and Irvington, where the average house sells for $300,000 and is probably within putting distance of a golf course or tennis court. The typical Westchester household

Brad Kessler is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in The New Yorker, The Village Voice *and* In These Times.

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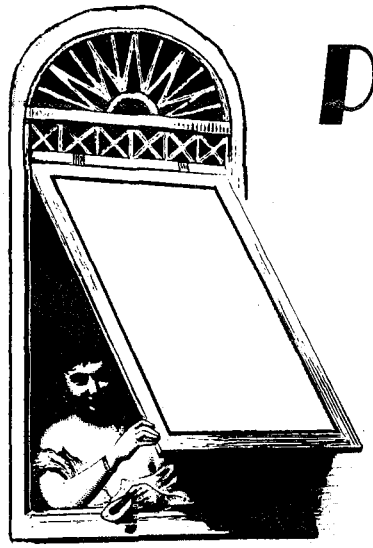

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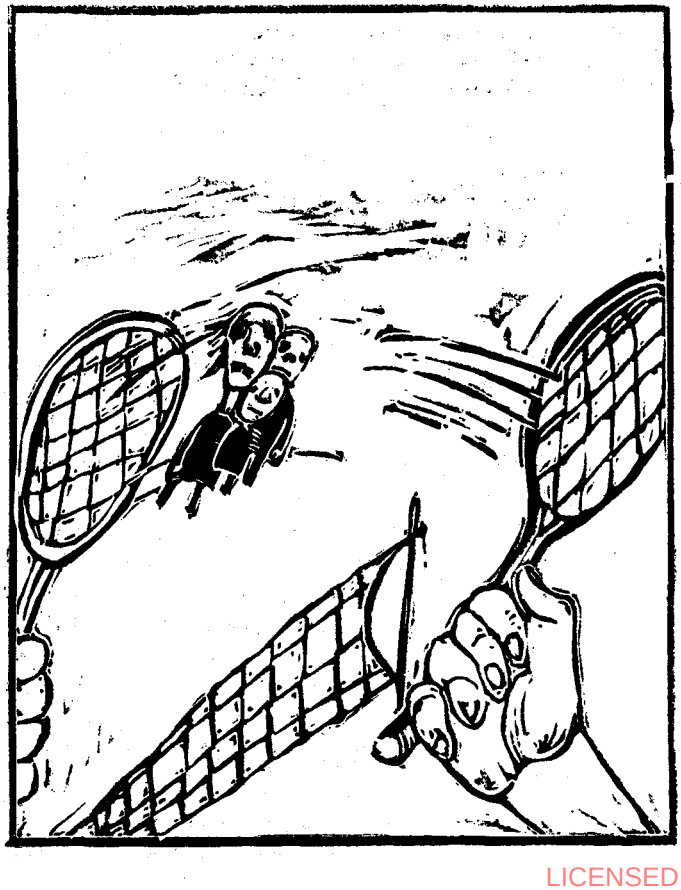
has an income of more than $40,000 a year, and even in the more blue-collar towns like Elmsford, Sybaris is never too far away: Right up the road from the Elmsford Motor Lodge live the Rockefellers on the 3,000-acre fiefdom their grandfather built; a little farther east, down Route 287, the corporate parks of "Platinum Mile" float above the verdure of Westchester Avenue like a topographic rendering of the Fortune 500 list—Texaco, Pepsico and International Paper, to name but a few. It's not surprising, then, that Westchester was home to the first golf course ever built in the New World, the first shopping mall and (as legend holds) the first cocktail. Yet now it has another superlative to add to its list, for Westchester today leads the nation in homeless people per capita.

At last count there were 4,200 homeless people in Westchester, most of them in families and among them 1,710 children. The majority became homeless because of what the Westchester Department of Social Services calls "economic reasons," which means they couldn't pay the rising rents, or were forced out of their apartments because of co-op conversion or gentrification. Some were burned out of their apartments or crowded out of public housing. All of them simply couldn't find another place to live because, as Roger Jones puts it, "Finding an affordable apartment in Westchester is like trying to thread a needle with a Mack truck."

Today just about every town in Country Club Country has its own story of native homelessness, even the matronly, mock-Tudor towns of Scarsdale and New Rochelle—the very symbols of Northeastern wealth. But to see the homeless in Westchester as something aberrant or contradictory is to miss the point entirely. Homelessness exists here *because* Westchester is one of the wealthiest counties in the country. Professionals who moved out of the city for a piece of Arcadia have been displacing poorer Westchester residents for decades. But in the Reagan years, the county's exorbitant housing costs spiraled upward and left even less room for those whose incomes corkscrewed downward at the same time. Unlike in the cities, homelessness in the suburbs is a diffuse matter. There is no central authority in a place like Westchester at which to point the finger of blame. Instead, responsibility is dissipated among village, town, county and state governments. The homeless themselves are thinly spread throughout the county, between vast suburban spaces, making them virtually invisible.



Michelle Altro is fairly typical of Westchester's homeless. Like Roger Jones, she lives at the Elmsford Motor Lodge, and has been there for eight months. She is 19 years old, white, dressed in acid-washed jeans and wears glasses with rose-colored rims. She's been living in the motel with her 10-month-old baby ever since her landlord kicked her out of her one-bedroom apartment in Ossining when he decided he didn't want infants living there. Michelle works at the nearby Sizzler for $4.75 an hour. The money's not great, but it's one of the few places that will hire you if you live in a motel. With the money she makes, and with the help of Section 8 funds, she can afford to pay as much as $300 a month for an apartment for herself and her infant. But nowhere in Westchester can she find an apartment at that rent, and neither can the various agencies, including Social Services and private organizations, that are looking for her.

Michelle can pretty much deal with life in the motel, with the maids who steal her medication and her baby's stuffed animals, with the addicts who smoke crack in the bathroom upstairs and whose clouds of cocaine smoke blow down through the vents into her apartment. She can deal with doors slamming around her at all hours of the night, with having nowhere to cook a hot meal, with being charged $5 by motel security just to have her door opened when she forgets her key. But the bugs are another thing entirely. It's not the cockroaches that she minds so much—although she leaves the lights on at night to keep them away—it's the ants, the biting kind, the ones that crawl up the legs of her baby's crib and get to its face, its eyes, its nostrils.

If you become homeless in Country Club Country, you'll probably end up at a motel like the Elmsford Motor Lodge or at any other of Westchester's forty-odd available motels. Your chances are one in five of being placed out of county, since Westchester does not have enough motel rooms to shelter all its homeless. You may be placed as far as eighty miles from your former home, in a motel near the Pennsylvania border, or be deported upstate to Poughkeepsie or Newburgh, where your children may be shipped back and forth from their school to the motel, on a two-hour ride twice a day. The county will pay the cab fare, which can run as much as $220 round-trip, but it will not pay for adults to travel to and from a job that they may have left eighty miles behind, in Yonkers or New Rochelle.

Many of the motels used for homeless people violate basic health, fire and safety regulations. The Fox Ridge Motor Inn

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in neighboring Putnam County, which housed twenty-three homeless families sent up from Westchester, was closed down in April by the State Supreme Court because it violated sanitary codes. In a typical motel as many as four people live in a room meant to accommodate an overnighting couple. Crime and drugs are the rule. People who live in the Elmsford Motor Lodge, for example, say that more than 80 percent of the residents use crack. Lestor Trebony, who runs the County Center Motel in White Plains, says that several of his residents became addicted to crack after they moved into the motel. "You get people coming in here that are so nice at the beginning," says Diane Schultz, who lives in the Elmsford Motor Lodge. "But by the time they leave here, they're drug addicts or they're so bitter because this place just makes them crazy. And then nobody will rent you an apartment once they find out you've been living in a motel."

When you visit a place like the Elmsford Motor Lodge, it is hard not to think of other forms of housing meant to contain a population rather than merely shelter it: Internment camps come to mind, as do model villages or strategic hamlets. Security guards watch the grounds with cameras and patrol the motel with walkie-talkies. Visiting hours are 8 in the morning to 10 at night, after which no one is admitted if he or she doesn't belong.

Most of the homeless motels in Westchester serve not only to contain the homeless people but also to conceal them from the outside world. The Elmsford Motor Lodge, the Parkway Motel, the Coachman Hotel and the Larchmont Motel, to name a few, are conveniently situated away from residential areas, along access routes or abandoned stretches of downtown. The Elmsford Motor Lodge is located on a wooded ridge, invisible to those driving by on Tarrytown Road. A few miles away, the Parkway Motel is similarly tucked away, in a wooded corner along the Saw Mill River Parkway so that the only people who can see it are motorists speeding by. The people who live in the motels feel they are being hidden and speak often of their isolation, of having nowhere to go, nothing to do. Placed in an alien, often hostile community, they stay inside their rooms and rarely go out. Even people who have lived in the motels for more than a year say they have little or no contact with the surrounding neighborhoods. And so the motels have become suburban ghettos, keeping the homeless to themselves—but unlike a ghetto, they are only temporary dwellings. There are no kitchens or living rooms or stoves, no place, no matter how dreary or destitute, they can call home.

To put a homeless family up in a one-bedroom motel unit, Westchester County pays an average rent of $3,000 a month. This is good business for the motel owners, and the local cab companies that transport the homeless to far-flung destinations are also enjoying something of a boom. But the irony of their profitability isn't lost on the homeless themselves. "I grew up in Westchester," says Roger Jones, "in a scattered-site public housing project. They were the last low-income housing projects ever built in the county, and that was done fifteen years ago. I want to know why they can't build anything like that anymore. People say they don't

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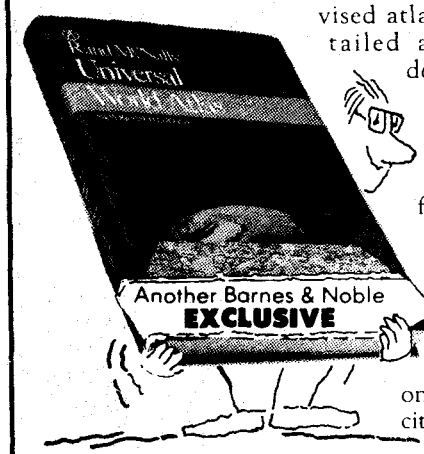

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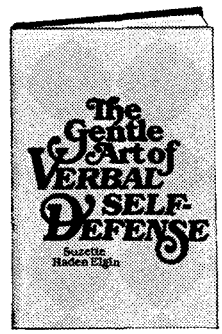

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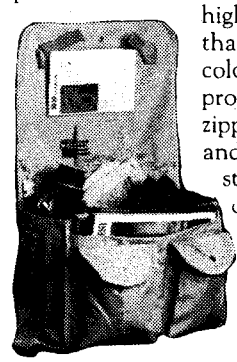

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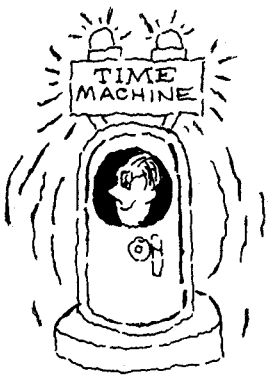

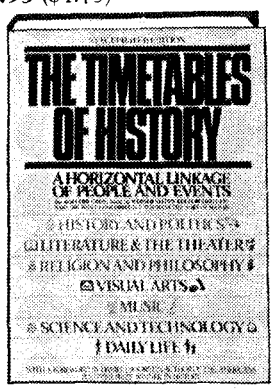

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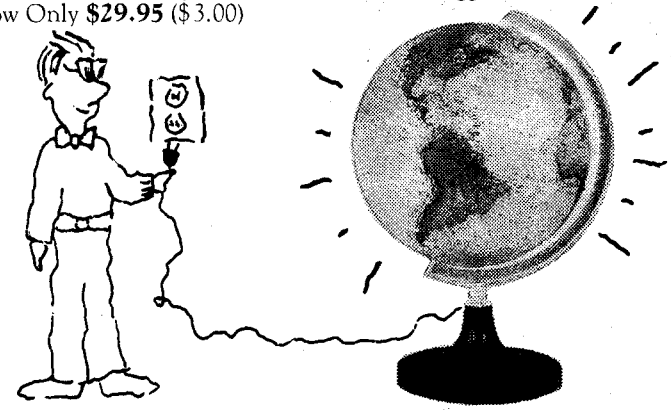

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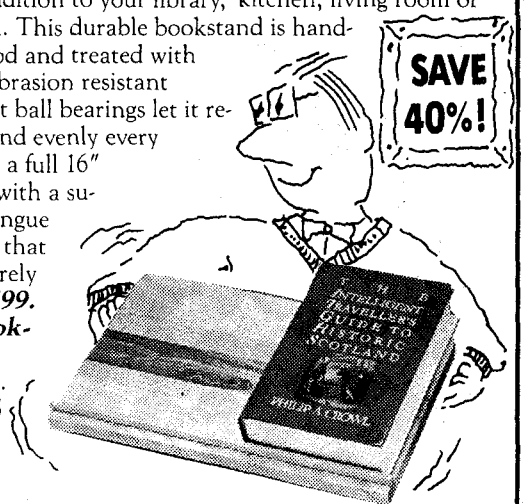

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want us in their backyards, but we lived here before those people even moved in. I guess people around here would rather pay $3,000 a month to keep us in these motels instead of seeing us have housing."

Some people, as it happens, do mind paying that kind of money for the homeless and would rather see them simply disappear or be given one-way bus tickets to Kansas, as one Westchester resident suggested to me, where housing is a lot cheaper. Articles appear periodically in the local papers decrying the absurdity of Westchester's homeless policy. Even the County Executive, a glad-handing Republican named Andrew O'Rourke, publicly laments the loss of money that could better be spent for other things. "Imagine how much permanent housing $64 million could build," he wrote recently in a letter to *The New York Times*. "Think of the other services—parks, programs for the elderly, the arts, day care—$64 million could buy." And yet, despite O'Rourke's letters and public proclamations, there is a quiet acceptance of the way things are, of keeping the homeless holed up in motel rooms, because the obvious solution of building low-income housing is simply a taboo subject in Country Club Country.

"There is a silence here about the homeless," says County Legislator Paul Feiner, who represents the town of Greenburgh and is one of the county's few self-styled progressives. "People in my district were very pleased when I came out saying let's help the homeless. But when I said I was going to support semipermanent housing, I lost a whole neighborhood. Everybody wants to fund the soup kitchens. You have a lot of churches and synagogues involved in preparing food and going out to feed the homeless, but that only keeps them homeless. Nobody talks about the real issue—building housing—because nobody wants it built. Greenburgh is just a sophisticated Yonkers. The people here don't send their elected officials bullets. They hire lawyers."

Who is responsible, then, for building affordable housing in suburbia? By law, nobody is. New York State law actually prohibits counties from putting up housing, on the premise that decisions as to where and when housing should be built are best left in the hands of local rather than county government. So the county blames towns, villages and cities for not taking the initiative, the state government for prohibiting counties from building housing and the Federal government for slashing the housing budget over the past ten years by some 80 percent. The local governments, for their part, point the finger at one another. "Communities with a significant percentage of low- or moderate-income population say, of course, that they've done their share," says John Nolon, a housing activist and law professor at Westchester's Pace University. "And those that do not have low-income populations say it's not their responsibility. The state is essentially at fault for not defining the responsibility of local governments; they have given no guidance whatsoever." Neither, for that matter, has the Federal government.

It's not that housing isn't being built in Westchester. In the past few years there has been a housing boom in the county; but the kind of housing that has been built is not the kind that many people who have lived in the county for years can afford. While Westchester's old stock of cheaper housing has burned and decayed, nothing has been built to replace it, save for $300,000 condominiums. No one even tries to build low-income housing on any significant scale in Westchester anymore. Some towns in the county, like Harrison and Yorktown, are discovering that their services are suffering because their firemen or police have to live miles away in less expensive communities. These towns have begun to construct housing priced below the market average in order to keep their necessary blue collars nearby.

But when it comes to housing their own poor or currently homeless, it's an entirely different matter. County Executive O'Rourke doesn't even see the need for building low-income housing in Westchester, and thinks that the housing problem will solve itself if "moderate-income" housing is built. "If we could get every community in Westchester to build decent housing for their own policemen and firemen," he told me recently, "we would ameliorate the housing problem. There is a way around the problem without ever asking anyone to build low-income housing in Westchester, because people are just not going to do it here."

And local history bears O'Rourke out, for the citizens of Westchester have consistently tried to block any attempt at building low-income housing in their county in the past few decades. Indeed, from its very inception, Westchester—like so many other affluent American suburbs—was predicated on the principle of exclusion. As early as the late nineteenth century, tenant farmers were being forced off county land as the New York City captains of industry built castles on top of Westchester's wooded hills and dramatically raised property values. Later, restrictive zoning laws kept out of the county what prohibitive prices alone couldn't. By 1980, for example, 99 percent of Westchester's residentially zoned land was reserved exclusively for single-family houses. In certain communities these houses must be surrounded by as much as four acres of land.

In 1972, the State Urban Development Corporation tried to remedy Westchester's desperate lack of low and moderately priced housing stock by implementing its Nine Towns program. The plan would have overridden local zoning ordinances and placed 100 low-income units in each of nine Westchester towns, but community opposition was so strong that the program was taken to court and eventually knocked down as a violation of "home rule." More recently, in 1987, Andrew Cuomo, New York Governor Mario Cuomo's son, proposed building a "transitional" housing facility

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called HELP II that would temporarily take in some of Westchester's homeless. Cuomo's plan called for the construction of six two-story buildings that would house 108 families in the middle of a thirty-acre wooded site not far from the Elmsford Motor Lodge, in a corner of Greenburgh called Mayfair-Knollwood. County Executive O'Rourke would donate county land; the Town Supervisor of Greenburgh, Anthony Veteran, a Democrat, would support the site in his own town; and Cuomo, through his HELP organization, would build the site and, after ten years, hand it over at no cost to the town for it to use in housing the elderly or its municipal employees. On the face of it, Cuomo's plan was the type of small arrangement that satisfied everyone: The taxpayers would pay a little less for housing their homeless, the politicians could say they were doing something to solve the housing crisis, the homeless themselves would have slightly better housing (albeit temporary), and Cuomo himself would reap longer-term political benefits for whatever office he may or may not choose to pursue.

Yet the residents of Knollwood-Mayfair would have none of it. Under the banner of a citizen's group called the Coalition of United Peoples (COUP), they mounted a popular campaign against the project. At one of the many raucous meetings held last year concerning Cuomo's project, hundreds of outraged local citizens showed up to shout down the project's sponsors. Their arguments were familiar enough—the proposed housing would lower property values, increase crime, put a strain on community services. But some were less predictable—that the housing would cut down the growth of precious trees; that parents would be afraid to send their children to the nearby Westchester Community College, and so enrollment would decline; that the project would, according to one resident, "erode not only the environmental quality of the area but the aesthetic and moral as well." One woman said the site was unsuitable because of deer ticks, and when a discussion came up about fire protection of the site, another woman yelled out, "Let it burn."

When the housing project was finally approved by the county, the Mayfair-Knollwood residents decided to secede from the Town of Greenburgh and create their own town, one in which no housing project would be built. The secession movement went to court, where it has been bottled up ever since.

Much has been made of Cuomo's HELP project and the subsequent secession movement, yet the project is not even remotely a solution to Westchester's homeless crisis. While the local media and the Coalition for the Homeless have praised Cuomo for heroically building housing for the homeless, nobody (except, ironically, the citizens of Mayfair-Knollwood) has mentioned the fact that his project is just another stopgap, like the motel rooms, keeping the homeless in a permanently temporary state. In spite of what some Westchester residents may hope, the homeless will not simply disappear from their county or somehow end up in Kansas—bus ticket or not. On the contrary, homelessness is rising at an alarming rate. This means that in the future, Country Club Country will increasingly become, as it already has for thousands, Motel Hell. □

Strategies

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

speak to the concerns of millions of unaffiliated followers and fans—all that in the furtherance of the progressive movement he built, led and still sees as the successor to the civil rights struggles, labor insurgencies and community action efforts of the 1960s. More than any figure in our time, Jackson addresses an ecumenical audience that not only fancies radical change but needs it. African-Americans, Native Americans, Arab-Americans, field workers, displaced farm and factory families, lesbians and gays, the underclass and the working poor have never before been included in such a permanent, wide-ranging, active coalition that operates both within and without the electoral realm. It can fix on a Democratic primary contest in Alabama, a pro-choice demonstration in Washington, the savings-and-loan bailout debate in Congress or a pollution crisis in California's Central Valley. Jackson wins some, loses a lot and sometimes simply steps away to come back another day.

Jackson's Rainbow is flawed in important ways, both conceptually and in practice. Since the 1988 campaign it has not been clear how Jackson's political agenda and the organizing wish lists of the various constituencies can mesh. There is continuing tension, and divergence, between the blacks who make up Jackson's mass base and the issue activists who contribute fewer voters to the coalition but have considerable clout by virtue of their ideological sophistication and organizing skills. The organizational structure of the Rainbow has been changed to consolidate Jackson's control at the expense of local chapters, but even so, not a whole lot is happening at the grass roots, at least not without Jackson's direction or interest.

It's fashionable for many white leftists, black intellectuals and lesser organizers to trash Jackson as an egotist, a grandstander, a personally ambitious elitist and a lousy administrator. "We invest all of our hopes and desires in him," a local Rainbow leader said recently, showing evident frustration as well as admiration. "He sees the world from his own angle of vision, which is not ours. He's an opportunist in every sense of the word, good and bad. But there's no other leadership. None." For in the face of the criticism, which is as loud inside his Rainbow as on the outside, his achievement is of historic proportions. He has traversed lines of class and race to create a genuine populist force that can play serious politics in the national arena. And he has not given up the game.

At times it seems as if Jackson were the real winner in 1988, not only of the Democratic nomination but of the presidency. Michael Dukakis is up to his eyebrows in political sludge. The "Massachusetts miracle," which provided the ideological rationale for his candidacy, has been rapidly overwhelmed by its own contradictions, and Dukakis has reverted to his favorite neoliberal measures: tax hikes for the middle class, protection for corporate capital and cuts in public services across the board. The University

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of Massachusetts is obliged to slash programs and enrollment. Budgeted AIDS funds were reduced; even the much-vaunted plan for extending private health insurance to uncovered workers and students, which Dukakis belatedly endorsed to give his presidential bid a boost, may have to be eviscerated and postponed. For the first time in almost two decades the Republicans have a good shot at capturing the governorship of that eminently Democratic state. Like the falling Sox, the local hero is a battered bum.

In June, Dukakis and Jackson appeared together for the first time since the election, at an antidrug march and rally in downtown Boston. A huge, racially integrated crowd of 20,000 filled the City Hall plaza for the event, and when Jackson appeared the old shout went up, "Run, Jesse, Run." But Dukakis, his popularity now barely breaking double digits, moved stealthily in and out of the line of march like a taxiing B-2.

"Dukakis never announced he was coming," Jackson told me the next day with unconcealed relish. "I expect some of his people feared a reaction. He marched, though most marchers didn't know he was there because he was up front, and when we got to the rally site he left. He would not face that crowd."

At another level, George Bush, too, pales by comparison with Jackson. Now in his eighth month in office—a sixth of the way through his term—Bush has little but a tasteless photo-op album and a roster of failed nominations to show for his Administration. On the plus side, the wimp gene in his character seems to have been dominant after all. He is pleased to let Mikhail Gorbachev occupy the center stage of world politics. He has more or less disengaged from Europe, southern Africa, Central America and the Middle East, and seems content to watch the U.S. economy slide into a recession he hopes will be mild and short. A good deal of energy must be spent feeding the monster that Reagan made of the Republican right, and keeping his own Cabinet in line. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh was scolded for suggesting that U.S. troops be sent to Colombia to fight the Medellín drug cartel, and Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan was told to let up on Exxon for its handling of the Valdez oil spill. It didn't even occur to Bush to go to Alaska when disaster struck. The only time he has shown real passion was over the Supreme Court's flag-burning decision, and even then it took him a few days and a goose from Lee Atwater to set him in motion.

Jackson, on the other hand, is articulating the only serious political opposition to Bushismo, just as his 1988 campaign presented the precise antithesis to Reaganism. While Democratic liberals from Representative Tom Foley to Governor Mario Cuomo were busy covering their electoral behinds and formulating "moderate" alternatives to a Stars and Stripes amendment, Jackson immediately launched a political attack: Bush is more worried about burning flags than burning crosses, he cracked. In other words, cheap patriotism covers deep racism. No one else spoke for those actually affected by Bush's ideological attack. Republicans don't mind when Democrats raise constitutional arguments against G.O.P. jingoism (remember the success of the charge "card-carrying members of the A.C.L.U."?); they get worried when they are seen to be betraying a large constituency they covet—like blacks.

Despite their extraordinary success in Congressional elections last year, Democrats are for the most part terrified of Republican power. They give Bush much more of a mandate than even he believes he deserves. But except for their opposition to certain Administration nominees, such as John Tower for Defense and William Lucas for Assistant Attorney General for civil rights, the Democrats have not presented substantive, programmatic resistance to the Bush regime. The most egregious example of the Democrats' cowardice was their refusal to demand an economically progressive resolution of the S&L debacle [see David Corn, "Sticking It to the Taxpayers," *The Nation*, Sept. 4/11]. But early on in the debate, Jackson jumped in with proposals to "tax the rich" and let the burden of the bailout fall on those who profited most from S&L profligacy—and can best afford to pay for it.

"I went through a period when we got our civil rights without our economic rights," Jackson said in our conversation in his suite in a midtown Manhattan hotel. "To have civil rights without economic justice is to have the right to dive in a swimming pool without water. It's the right to check into the hotel without the ability to check out. Frederick Douglass made the observation in the last century; he said, 'Free, free to starve, free to be homeless, free to be uneducated, no freedom at all.' The next logical step beyond 'freedom and democracy' is a fair distribution of goods and services. In Dr. King's March on Washington speech, there's so much focus on the poetic climax, the rhythm and rhyme of 'I have a dream,' there's almost no focus on the economic content: We've come to the seat of power of the richest country on earth, and what we get is a bad check, marked insufficient funds. Everybody wants to talk about the Dream."

In this summer of acute labor crises, Jackson alone among national political leaders has committed himself to the union cause. He flies between picket and rally sites for the Pittston coal miners in Appalachia, the Eastern Airlines strikers in Miami and Newark and the Local 1199 hospital workers in New York City. In Boston, he spoke at a rally of some 10,000 people in support of the phone company strike—surely one of the biggest public demonstrations for a labor action in many years. Most Democrats have been sheepish or silent about the labor struggles at home, however much they support workers in the mines and shipyards of Eastern Europe. Jackson consistently connects labor insurgency in Poland and the Soviet Union with union militancy in America.

Jackson's ties to the activist edge of the labor movement were forged between his 1984 and 1988 campaigns. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. executive hierarchy endorsed front-runner Walter Mondale early in the 1984 primary season, presumably to get its car on the inside track of his campaign and (although it now seems absurd) any possible Democratic administration. Mondale had supported major A.F.L.-C.I.O. legislation and hence was considered a "labor candidate." Jackson concentrated that year on black voters, particularly

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An Open Letter to the Progressive Community

The U.S. government wants us to "forgive and forget" those responsible for the Iran/Contra crimes. Yet some activists who opposed these crimes now face life in prison. . .

One of Ed Meese's last actions before leaving the Justice Department was to order the indictment of six long-time political activists on charges of protesting U.S. domestic and international policies through "violent and illegal means."

Like other recent political trials, *U.S. v. Whitehorn, et. al.*, (The Resistance Conspiracy Case) targets domestic opponents of illegal practices such as the contra war against Nicaragua and the invasion of Grenada. The investigation of these defendants is linked to the recent illegal FBI investigations of CISPES and the Central America solidarity movement. Like them, it's characterized by massive FBI misconduct and illegality.

The six — Alan Berkman, Tim Blunk, Marilyn Buck, Linda Evans, Susan Rosenberg, and Laura Whitehorn — are charged with being part of a network of groups that claimed responsibility for bombings of government and military buildings in 1983-85, including the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Capitol after the invasion of Grenada. No one was injured in any of these actions. The government makes no claim to know who actually carried out the bombings. Rather, it wants to convict the defendants by proving that they shared a "common purpose" of resisting illegal U.S. war crimes: "guilt by political association."

The government has already put these defendants through fourteen separate political prosecutions. Five of the defendants are already serving sentences of up to 70 years. The sixth has been held in preventive detention for 2 1/2 years. This April, the trial judge dismissed all charges against three of the defendants on the grounds of double jeopardy, but the Justice Department has vowed to fight the decision.

The government wants to stage a show trial to have a chilling effect on activists. It uses the guise of security to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation to make a fair trial impossible. A bulletproof plexiglass wall in the courtroom separates the defendants from their families and supporters. Surveillance cameras in the courtroom are trained on defendants and spectators.

This is political persecution, not a criminal prosecution. The targets are people who have shown a deep commitment to human rights and social justice over many years. There may be political disagreements among us, but we are all part of the community of people in the U.S. who have opposed and tried to stop the murderous, inhumane and illegal practices of the Reagan administration. The defendants in this case, like the other political prisoners in this country, need to be returned to our communities and not disappear into the prison system. We must lend our voices and support to ensure their rights — and thereby our own. We ask you to join in a campaign to halt this vindictive prosecution. Stopping this last prosecution brought by Reagan and Meese can be an important step in dismantling their legacy of a politicized criminal justice system and resurgent FBI.

• Drop this politically motivated indictment • Stop preventive detention/Release Laura Whitehorn on bail
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new black voters, in the South and in some Northern cities, and on rank-and-file workers in the more progressive unions.

Despite its gratitude for labor votes, the Democratic Party had more or less abandoned unionism as an idea (and workers as people) under the onslaught of Reaganism and the criticism of their neoliberal stars, such as Gary Hart, who decried the influence of "special interests" in party councils. Labor was clearly the most special of all the Democratic constituencies. Few voices were raised, and certainly no bodies were put on the line, against the corporate and media counterattack on labor, which was at full throttle.

While the mainstream Democrats were futilely courting the prosperous "middle class," Jackson began organizing those who were cast out of Reagan's Eden. The constituency of the dispossessed is not only numerically significant (if the unprosperous voted in the same proportions as the prosperous, a different Eden would appear); it is also a racially and ethnically integrated group wherein Jackson's "common ground" rhetoric bears reality.

Workers' "prosperity" has been on the decline, according to a number of important measures, since the early 1970s; but those most seriously impacted by Reaganomics have of course been blacks and other minorities, unskilled and semiskilled workers, employees in over-the-hill manufacturing and mining industries, benefitless part-timers and the "burger-slingers," "bed-makers" and "bedpan-changers" in the service sector. This is the other "Reagan class" of nonunionized, often immigrant and nonwhite, largely female toilers at the bottom of the boom of the 1980s. They are the people who "work every day," as Jackson used to chant in his stump speeches, but who are cut off from the benefits of the American economic miracle so envied these days by Hungarians, Chinese and other capitalist wannabes.

By the time of the October 1987 Rainbow Coalition convention in Raleigh, North Carolina, where Jackson officially announced his candidacy for president, several important unions were on his side. And at the Atlanta Democratic convention in 1988, the International Association of Machinists' William Winpisinger put Jackson's name in nomination.

The labor "issue" is a way for Jackson to cross the racial barrier and bring whites into the coalition, just as the drug "issue" gave him cachet in white Northern precincts in 1988. "When I first raised the drug issue," Jackson recounted, "the reporters all said, 'Well, the big issue is the deficit, and competence, and da-da-da.' I said drugs. They said, 'Anybody who has gone to high school can talk about drugs.' So Paul Simon leaped up and down talking about the deficit and putting forth a big budget—and they ate him up in Iowa."

But the drug "crisis" is now beyond Jackson's control, and in any case he is not happy with the response he provoked. He did not have "boot camps" and escalating repression in mind when he talked to kids and their parents last year. "There does have to be more responsibility and less permissiveness, what amounts to a kind of cultural shift," Jackson said, but it has to come "from the inside, from bottom up, not top down. My sense of struggle in the North and in the South, and in Chicago, has taught me that whether it's Deng in Beijing or Bush in America, repression will not work."

Just as the drug issue is no longer his, so other "cultural" issues do not lend themselves to Jackson's particular requirements to create a wide area of common ground between blacks and whites. Jackson can't raise the crime issue as he did with drugs in 1988. The crime crisis, which is deeply felt, does not lend itself to the confessional "I Am Somebody" approach Jackson used when he talked to kids about drugs. Voters want to help kids get off drugs. They want to send criminals to jail and give them the chair. Besides, drugs were seen as a middle-class white problem as well as a black ghetto one. But when whites think about crime, they see black.

"Jackson can't go into an inner-city school and ask the kids 'Anyone who has committed a crime, raise your hand,'" an adviser said with a grim smile. "He used to ask for hands of those who smoked pot or did crack or contemplated suicide. What is he going to say, 'How many committed an assault, all those who did a B&E, any murderers out there?' He just can't own the issue of crime."

If Jackson is to extend his white support beyond the 15 percent who voted for him in the Democratic primaries, he must make his populist economic message the crossover vehicle. If Americans are hurting, they will listen to his appeals for economic justice and an end to economic violence, and they will welcome his proposals for reducing the grotesque inequality that has characterized American society since the demise of the New Deal ethic.

In practical politics, the entrance to the economic issue lies through labor unions. But that card has not always been easy for Jackson to play. In Newark, for example, Mayor Sharpe James, a Rainbow stalwart and the kind of tough, up-and-coming black politician Jackson admires, was not

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pleased when Jackson made plans to join a demonstration against Eastern Airlines in his city. Frank Lorenzo, head of the Continental-Eastern conglomerate, has been "good" to Newark, providing jobs and taxes and promising business expansion to a city otherwise down in the dumps. He would no doubt appreciate a little labor "discipline" imposed by the city government in return for his favors.

"James discouraged mobilization for the Eastern strike," an official of another union reported. "It's the classic social-democratic scenario. The unions support the politicians and then when they form a government they screw the workers. There was a lot of pressure on Jackson not to participate in the rallies, but he resisted. Jesse sometimes waffles, but when the chips are down he will do the right thing."

The tension between Jackson's obligation to Sharpe James and his commitment to the unions striking Eastern is a stark but familiar example of the problem he faces as head of a coalition, however loose and incomplete it sometimes seems to be. The International Association of Machinists, which first called the strike against Eastern, was an eager supporter of Jackson's presidential campaign and the Rainbow Coalition, via Winpisinger. (Another was the Communications Workers of America's big District 1 in the Northeast, via the district's activist vice president, Jan Pierce.) Jackson "owes" those unions, but he also owes James and other black politicians support and loyalty for the care and feeding of his most important political base. That loyalty was tested again in New Jersey in the recent Democratic gubernatorial primary. Alan Karcher, a former speaker of the New Jersey Assembly and the only white public official on the state level to back Jackson in 1988, was running on the state's most progressive, pro-labor platform. He had the support of many local Rainbow Coalition members. But Sharpe James and other black pols, who also wrap themselves in the Rainbow, were supporting the ho-hum liberal front-runner, Representative James Florio.

"Here was the perfect case of the black mayor versus white activist problem," one of Jackson's political counselors told me. "The feeling was that Florio was ahead 3 to 1, that if we supported Karcher we'd get our ass kicked and it would be just another case of our supporting lost causes. So we supported Florio. Karcher had good politics but he never delivered. At times, Jackson feels that, with few exceptions, grass-roots people don't carry their own weight, that they like taking a piece of his action rather than building something that will outlast him and them, that there's a lot of rhetoric and not much reality there. As you know, the left did not support Jackson until very late in the game in 1988, and there was no strong left that was a major building block of the campaign."

In fact, in between the two presidential campaigns a small group of left activists, most of them white, had a great deal of power in the Rainbow, such as it then was. Many of them were also members of the National Committee for Independent Political Action (NCIPA), a small-scale, low-profile association of old New Leftists, radical academics and community organizers yearning to build a political force outside the two-party system but willing in a pinch to work

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for progressive Democrats. NCIPA has lots of energy and some administrative skills but no discernible popular base; when it came time for Jackson to launch his 1988 campaign, NCIPA people were out and a lot of hard-nosed types took over. Inevitably, there was bad blood between rival factions. A few former Rainbow warriors stopped talking to each other, and the conflict caused some campaign workers to drop out along the way.

For the white left, the 1988 campaign ended when Dukakis was nominated in Atlanta. Jackson himself stumped for the party nominee (when the Dukakis people would let him), and most black politicians who had been for Jackson worked hard for the Democrats. Indeed, their own interests demanded it. Even in defeat, the Democrats can and do give rewards to party workers, and only Democratic power, miserly though it is, can provide economic and social benefits to the mass of the Rainbow's distressed voters. Jackson understood that a correct line by itself can't feed the hungry or educate the illiterate, and that power counts for a lot in the world of the here and now.

Early this year, the conflict that had been evident in the campaign shifted to the Rainbow Coalition as an organization. Jackson and many of the people who had run his electoral efforts wanted the Rainbow to be a sleeker, more efficient, campaign-ready vehicle than it had been between 1984 and 1988. They worried that local members would use Jackson's name and fame for their own purposes without his consent and that he was accountable to the chapters without their being accountable to him. Jackson also saw that local chapters were so widely diverse in their memberships that they might compromise the national Rainbow's claim to inclusiveness; some chapters were short on lesbians and gays, others had no representatives from the all-important black churches, and still others were oblivious to the labor union constituency. Finally, some around Jackson were concerned that if the chapters had complete autonomy and were run as membership organizations, political sects and disciplined radical groupuscles could stage a local or even a national coup and destroy the organization.

"Their [active leftists'] conception is totally unrealistic," a longtime white associate of Jackson's said recently. "Their theory is that the Rainbow is a card-carrying organization, meeting every year, with local, district, state, national and leadership levels. Perhaps they'll raise $2 million, at best. But what will happen is that 200 people in each state will take over the meetings and the organizations. That's not 'democracy,' as they claim. The League of Revolutionary Something or Other can take over, crazies in the Bay Area can take over, there will be factionalism and Jackson will be dragged around and eventually submerged. In the black community there's a 'constitutionalist' tradition of mass membership organizations like the N.A.A.C.P., but there's also a 'movement' tradition which is its reverse, like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference."

Jackson tried to compromise between what another Rainbow aide called "the impossible Old Left dream and a dreadful New Left nightmare." The Rainbow kept its central structure, with local leaders that the national office (and Jackson) could pick or remove. The local leaderships will be obliged to have representatives of all the constituencies, and they will work on national campaigns as well as local issues.

Many of the white activists and some of the blacks who had worked at the grass roots avidly opposed Jackson's new rules as undemocratic, alienating and self-defeating. NCIPA co-chair and Rutgers University law professor Arthur Kinoy reported that he was "very much opposed to the bylaws changes [which] undermine the ability of the Rainbow to grow as a mass-based organization."

"Is Jackson still committed to the Rainbow's independence?" Kinoy asked. "Only life will tell. It could become purely a campaign organization for him, but that concept would not only be very undermining of its ultimate goals but also not very effective for Jesse Jackson himself. His power has flowed from the fact that he has been able to reach out to millions of people."

While certain local Rainbow organizations, such as Boston's and Vermont's, continue to act as progressive action projects, many others are waiting for the next Jackson call. If he decided to run for Mayor of D.C., they could be sitting around with little to do for a long time. Jackson likes the D.C. option, not least of all because others seem, for the moment, to be problematic. If Bush stumbles along without a major fall, he would be hard for any Democrat to beat in 1992. Jackson has considered a run for the Senate in South Carolina or Illinois, but it is felt he could not win a general election in the former and might not beat Paul Simon in the primary in the latter. A loss in a Senate race could be a "career-ending defeat," close friends believe.

Defeat does not seem a real possibility in Washington, but the mayoralty would take him out of the national organizing that is his forte. Robert Borosage, one of his key issues advisers in 1988, thinks it would be a shame for Jackson to isolate himself. "No one else in America is talking to people across racial and class lines," Borosage said. "He's essential to a national populist movement."

"Obviously, many people for different reasons have been saying, 'Do it,'" Jackson said. "Some say do it because Washington is a national and international city. It is the capital city of the Western world. It is the place where the Congress and the Supreme Court sit and the President lives. It is the place where all the first-line ambassadors of the world live. It has a significant and supportive indigenous constituency. It ought to be a model city. On the other hand, there are those who are blinded to what we've done already in national and international politics, and whose recommendation is perverse."

In other words, many want Jackson tucked away in one city, right under the nose of a generally hostile Administration and Congress, faced with so many intractable urban crises that he is bound to fail. It doesn't sound very promising, after all. But Jackson has confounded the savviest of critics and commentators time after time. Indeed, the whole history of his political effort has been one of exceeding expectations. Jackson knows how to get ahead. What he is trying to figure out now is how to do the right thing. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

What Culture Should Mean

LILLIAN S. ROBINSON

Once upon a time the introduction of writings by women and people of color, both American and Third World, was called "politicizing the curriculum." Only *we* had politics, you see (and its nasty litter-mate, ideology), whereas *they* had standards. But nowadays, former Education Secretary William Bennett equates the modification of Stanford's Western Civilization (the required course) with the destruction of Western civilization (the social phenomenon); Lynne Cheney, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, sneers at universities that require students to take ethnic literature seriously; and the outgoing President devotes his last moments in office to excoriating the present approach to teaching history, with its trendy preference for critical thinking over mindless nationalism. Meanwhile, Christopher Clausen, head of the Pennsylvania State University English department, deplores the (dubious) fact that more undergraduates are required to read *The Color Purple* than the works of Shakespeare. And a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature inquires rhetorically about the whereabouts of "the African Proust," apparently determined to bypass all African novelists until that one materializes.

Moreover—and notwithstanding elective and appointive offices, Nobel Prizes and university chairs—these assaults are couched in a discourse of marginality to some perceived radical hegemony. It is this claim to outsider, even guerrilla, status that underlies the aggressiveness of the attack. Now that those on the other side have so blatantly revealed that they have politics, dare we hope they'll recognize that we have standards? Apparently not, for we continue to be accused of adopting "sociological" criteria while they defend "universal values," the rhetorical weapons of choice being the compound verb "to throw out" and the pseudo-explanatory "simply because."

That is, those of us who want to expand (though I prefer to say enrich) the canon of great books and the curriculum based on it are accused of wanting *to throw out* the classics and replace them with works chosen *simply because* their authors are female, nonwhite or non-Western. The debate might be more effectively engaged if there were in fact a tendency in the reformist camp that proposed throwing out the entire received tradition. But as far as I know, the furthest we've gone is to propose adding to it and reading the whole tradition from a perspective informed by our sense of what is usually omitted and what that omission itself teaches.

"Throwing out" is, in any event, a rather abstract notion when it comes to the canon, which has no prescribed number of places within it. The curriculum, however, is indeed susceptible to "throwing out"; there, adding new material does entail squeezing or even eliminating other material. Well, *isn't* this "throwing out" the great books? I think not, because the real challenge is to their nature as required reading, and hence to the view that "every educated person" must be familiar with a certain set of texts in preference to other texts.

Accompanying the accusation of abandoning the great works is the charge that we are practicing a kind of literary affirmative action, a policy understood in this context to mean hiring or promoting the un- and underqualified. The application of the affirmative action concept and its concomitant "quotas" to this debate is apparently based on the assumption that no claim is being made for the new material as literature, and that certainly none could be sustained. We are said to be proposing the addition of new voices "simply because" of their gender, race or nationality, with no regard for the aesthetic values that had hitherto defined and (as it happens) closed the curriculum. A different aesthetic is presumed to be no aesthetic. And the female, black, working-class or homosexual experience is uncritically assumed to be, at best, an unlikely candidate for canonization, precisely because it is the marked variant, whereas the experience of straight white men has a unique claim to universality.

In fact, however, we have always maintained that the new material has literary resonance, acknowledging the power of literature to move, stimulate and transform human consciousness. So the actual difference between our respective positions is that we assume such literary power can come from a wide range of places in the culture and a wide set of social experiences, whereas they assume we are evoking values and power external to the workings of literature.

Meanwhile, can Saul Bellow really be waiting for the African Proust to materialize before he reads African fiction? If so, he's going to have to wait a lot longer and he'll be missing a great deal of wonderful writing. In the process, he denies to the African writer the very privilege he arrogates to himself of selecting a literary form and model appropriate to the enterprise. Despite all Moses Herzog's letters to the great male thinkers of Europe, Bellow's representation of the accumulation of the past in the individual consciousness is very different from that found in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. And surely (surely!) he knows that and believes it's acceptable. Or does he secretly think he's the Chicago Proust?

Even leaving Bellow's own fiction out of the equation, one might argue that Proust dealt with certain issues quite familiar to the contemporary African writer—the operation, for instance, of modernization upon an essentially tribal society. And it is as natural for an African writer to center a narrative on the installation or the aftermath of colonization as it was for Proust to focus on the Dreyfus affair. If it made sense for Proust as a Jew and a homosexual to dissect the invented Swann and the historical Dreyfus or the various inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, it also makes sense for Chinua Achebe, Bessie Head, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mariama Bâ, Amos Tutuola or Buchi Emecheta to tell us about the range of economic, cultural and sexual confrontations between the native peoples and Europeans. As with opening up the American tradition, it is not because we owe it to the poor benighted Africans to give them some representation in an expanded definition of the literary tradition. Rather, we owe it to literature.

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Well, maybe Bellow doesn't want to know from colonialism and neocolonialism and Third World debt peonage, even filtered through the inner life and sensibility of a single tormented individual. Arguably, he doesn't want to know about this stuff any more than the denizens of the Guermantes' drawing room or even the Verdurins' wanted to hear about Captain Dreyfus. But if Bellow grants French literature the right to have had a Zola as well as a Proust—and how can he fail in this retroactive courtesy?—it seems strange, to say the least, to deny an equivalent range to the emerging literatures of Africa. An equivalent range, but not an identical one. Africa doesn't necessarily need its Proust.

In the early 1960s, during the struggle over a national language for Tanzania, President Julius Nyerere translated *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar* into Swahili. Critic Stephen Arnold maintains that Nyerere's translations assisted "the meteoric rise of literature in Swahili to its stature as a national literature today [while] . . . cautiously asserting that some things in the colonialist's culture might be of value in the formation of Tanzanian national culture." But most educated Westerners would smile rather than gasp at Arnold's notion of a "meteoric rise," and Bellow would remind us that there has certainly been no Tanzanian Shakespeare anyway, and that life is too short to bother with anything else, which is automatically understood as anything less.

Moreover, when a Third World writer does make use of symbols, myths and imagery from the dominant Western tradition, the variations are as important as the theme. It seems to me, for instance, that the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka may be seen as the African Brecht, although in the process of reinventing the filiation from John Gay to Brecht to himself, Soyinka proves a rather more refractory son of his literary father than Brecht was. A greater degree of deviation is required by his condition as a Western-educated black man in neocolonial Africa.

As someone with a grounding in the literary tradition, I confess I think the story about Nyerere translating Shakespeare into Swahili is rather charming. (Although I wish there were an audience for English translations of the Swahili literature his gesture inspired.) But I am also convinced that it is dangerous to proceed from there to fetishizing Shakespeare's purported universality at the expense of what might come from a black speaker of Swahili or English. There is no reason to assume that Shakespeare was any less grounded in his own history, with its particular opportunities and limits, than today's writers are. And we know that his history included not only the class, national and cultural experience of Elizabethan England but also his membership in the male sex. For Virginia Woolf has told us what would have happened to that brilliant failed poet, his sister.

Some argue that Shakespeare is so universal we don't need the others, with their gender, race and national blinders. The professor who complained about *The Color Purple* being taught in more required courses than Shakespeare thinks it's a shame because the Bard shows us a greater human range than Walker does. I am not prepared to concede even that, but if it were so, is there no value in being exposed to what Shakespeare leaves out of the range? Is there no point on the register of human experience where his approach is less than adequate? After all, his exploration of domestic violence, one of Walker's central themes, is *The Taming of the Shrew*. His victim of colonialism is the monster Caliban. His black man is the Prince of Morocco or Othello. His black woman, aside from a single nasty remark in *Love's Labour's Lost*, is nonexistent. Doesn't Alice Walker have something to tell us about "incestuous sheets" that *Hamlet* hasn't already covered?

The problem is, the universality argument is not usually made in terms of the range of human types and experiences the gentleman from Penn State invoked. The universality claimed for the classics is more often thought to reside in their general themes—where states of mind and spirit are understood as more universal than physical commonality—and the broad sympathy they express. This is the approach Lynne Cheney takes in her 1988 report *Humanities in America*. At one point, Cheney cites the passage in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* in which the memoirist describes her childhood feelings about Shakespeare. She was eager to memorize one of his poems to recite at a church function, but she knew that her grandmother, with whom she was living in a small Arkansas town, would insist her piece be something by Langston Hughes or Countee Cullen, poets who spoke from the black experience. The words Angelou wished she could use to explain it to her formidable grandmother derive from this notion of universal sympathy. The adult writer, looking back, wishes she had been able to plead, "But I *know* that William Shakespeare was a black woman!"

I am not sure if this quotation from Angelou—the report's only reference to a noncanonical text—is a monumental misreading or an equally stunning example of bad faith. For the story as Angelou tells it actually begins with her rape at age 8 by her mother's lover. At the man's trial, she tells a lie to cover her sense of complicity in a previous incident of sexual molestation. As a result, the rapist is acquitted, and then murdered by the child's vengeful male relatives. Maya, packed off to stay with her grandmother in the South, learns the distorted lesson that her speech could bring about a death. So she remains silent for a year, talking only to her brother, until a sympathetic older woman lends her some poems of Shakespeare. The sonnet beginning "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" speaks to the condition of the abused, aphonic 9-year-old. That's what she feels *she* is, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes. The recognition of herself in those words makes her want to speak again and recite the words of this man who'd understood her. But she knows her grandmother will never understand wherein Shakespeare, too, was a black woman.

This story certainly has multiple meanings. It does not seem to me that one of them is that Shakespeare the great writer could read the heart of this black child, but rather that Maya Angelou, at 9 and through all her pain, was an extraordinary *reader*. The incident hardly lends itself to the use to which it was put by the N.E.H. chair, which was to suggest that, although reading Shakespeare helped

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make the scarred child a speaker and eventually a poet herself, it is superfluous for us or our students to read Angelou—except to pick out specious morals about the timeless, placeless, personless value of the great books.

If we have to read black women's literature for moral lessons, I prefer the scene in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* in which a community organizer takes a single mother and her too many children to the park to see an all-black production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As they walk home after the enchanting event, one of the children asks, "Mama . . . Shakespeare's black?" And she replies, "Not yet." It's a nice idea, a black theater group performing Shakespeare for the children of Brewster Place, and it's also fitting that the militant organizer, who has adopted the African name Kiswana and whose boyfriend directs the troupe, is the one who encourages them to go. But Naylor is hardly telling us that exposing those kids to Shakespeare is the beginning or the end of what "culture" should mean to them. Shakespeare's not black *yet*. And when he is, it will not be because of the protean universality of a single white male born in Stratford-on-Avon 425 years ago, but because we all understand that although Shakespeare is dead, great poetry can still be written.

Most students will not turn out to be Shakespeare, whatever reading list their institutions enshrine. But the educational event we call empowerment is the same for both readers and writers. It is one that replaces a fetishized respect for culture as a stagnant secular religion with respect for culture as a living historical process, in which one's own experience is seen as an authentic part. □

The Keynes Mutiny

ROBERT POLLIN

THE DEBT AND THE DEFICIT: False Alarms/Real Possibilities. *By Robert Heilbroner and Peter Bernstein. W.W. Norton. 144 pp. $17.95. Paper $5.95.*

What is the impact on the economy of Federal government deficit spending? Among economists, no public policy question has created more confused irresolution; politicians and the press have been equally muddled. Recall that in the 1932 presidential campaign both Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt trumpeted the prevailing economics orthodoxy that eliminating the Federal budget deficit was necessary to overcome the Depression. Thirty years later, mainstream thinking had undergone a complete reversal. President John Kennedy, following the prevailing orthodoxy of his day, proposed that the government deliberately run a deficit to stimulate a sagging economy. By now, we are back to the 1930s view. Few politicians today would dare suggest that a budget deficit could have a salutary impact on the economy; junior economists advancing such ideas can anticipate a rocky path to tenure.

Robert Heilbroner and Peter Bernstein have been active participants in the deficit debate through many of its metamorphoses. In 1963 they published *A Primer on Government Spending*, which, addressed to a suspicious general audience, explained briefly and with exceptional clarity the Keynesian logic that then prevailed among economists. At the time, a large share of establishment opinion maintained that the Federal government, just like an ordinary household, could not deliberately run deficits on a regular basis without courting a "grim reckoning" of public bankruptcy, hyperinflation and currency debasement.

Heilbroner and Bernstein offered two main counterarguments. Following the position initially developed by John Maynard Keynes in 1936 in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, they contended that governments could stimulate capitalist economies during periods of economic downturn by running budget deficits. These deficits would put more money into the pockets of households and businesses, which would in turn encourage private spending and employment. According to Heilbroner and Bernstein, an intelligently administered program of deficit spending was not a form of profligacy but a powerful tool for counteracting the inherent instability of capitalism.

The other point the two economists emphasized was one that Keynes had slighted. They said that it mattered what the government's borrowing was used to purchase. Borrowed funds used to enhance the economy's long-term productive capacity—through increased spending on infrastructure, research and development or education, for example—are ultimately self-financing, because they will generate increases in income over the long run to cover the debt. According to Heilbroner and Bernstein, only deficit spending that finances mainly operating expenses or increases in consumption should be seen as burdensome. Thus, they suggested that governments create a capital account, following the practice of business accounting, to clarify the extent to which deficit spending actually created a long-term debt. In their view much of the government's borrowing was supporting productive activity, and was therefore not burdensome.

A Primer on Government Spending sold well and was widely appreciated, even by President Kennedy himself, who read it in manuscript shortly before his assassination. Twenty-six years later, Heilbroner and Bernstein have written a second primer, *The Debt and the Deficit: False Alarms/Real Possibilities*. This book, like its predecessor, is a brief and remarkably clear exposition. It also shows the consistency of their thinking: Despite changing fashions, they have held to the view that deficit spending can be a beneficial force by financing the growth of productive assets in the public sector and by countering capitalism's tendencies toward recession and instability. But it will be harder for this book to persuade its readers. Today, as in the early 1960s, many people look upon government deficits with disfavor, even fear. (Heilbroner and Bernstein cite a national opinion poll from late 1988 that found that by a wide margin, Americans believe that reducing the budget deficit should be the top priority of the Bush Administration.) And now the public's disapproval of deficits is reinforced by most mainstream economists.

But even confronting professional colleagues is not Heilbroner and Bernstein's greatest hurdle. Their primary challenge is to make sense of the past twenty years. Since the late 1960s, Federal deficit spending has become a permanent component of the U.S. economy. According to official figures, 1969 was the last year in which the government ran a surplus. Moreover, the size of official deficits has been growing sharply relative to the rest of the economy; it represented an aver-

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age of 0.8 percent of the gross national product in the 1960s, 2.3 percent in the 1970s and 4.3 percent in the 1980s. But even persistent and growing deficits are not inherently troublesome. The real problem is that as the official deficits have increased, broad indicators of U.S. economic well-being—investment and productivity growth, corporate profitability and household incomes—have stagnated. Thus, contrary to the Keynesian assumptions of Heilbroner and Bernstein that deficit spending is a stimulus to growth, it appears that since the late 1960s rising deficits have been accompanied by faltering growth.

This experience of growing deficits amid declining economic performance has turned the economics profession against the Keynesian thinking defended in *The Debt and the Deficit*. The mild dissatisfaction with capitalism implicit in Keynes's views never sat well with economic orthodoxy. Predictably, then, as Keynesianism has appeared increasingly unable to explain contemporary conditions, mainstream economists have retreated to the age-old verities of free-market logic.

The most widely held view now is that large deficits themselves cause declining economic performance. According to this position, the government's heavy borrowing "crowds out" private capitalists from credit markets, making it more difficult for them to obtain financing to pursue investment opportunities. As investment is thus inhibited, the expansion and modernization of plant and equipment is constrained, leading in turn to a stagnation in productivity and overall economic well-being. The grim forebodings of earlier periods are recalled in the "crowding out" literature. *Day of Reckoning* is the portentous title of a recent book by Benjamin Friedman of Harvard University's economics department, one of the most distinguished purveyors of this view.

The problem with this position, as Friedman himself recognizes (even if inadvertently) in his book, is that businesses have not been crowded out of U.S. credit markets in recent years. Rather, as he says, they have undertaken "record borrowing" but have "used an unusually large part of these funds for purposes other than productive new investment." In other words, Friedman suggests, investment funds *are* available for business, but managers are squandering the money on leveraged buyouts and similar debauches. To recognize this, however, implies that the problem of declining investment growth may be the fault of capitalism itself, not the budget deficit, and such conclusions remain beyond the pale of respectable economics discourse.

The main contender for the affections of the economics mainstream is an argument developed by Robert Barro, another Harvard economist. Barro employs a mathematical model of free-market logic to reach the unprecedented conclusion that (aside from uncertain "second order" effects) deficits have no impact whatsoever. This, he says, is because rational people will always realize that they eventually have to pay the principal and interest on the government's new debt in the form of higher taxes. Armed with this understanding, rational individuals will respond to deficits by increasing their personal savings by an amount equal to the taxes they will have to pay to retire the government's new debt. If people actually behaved in this fashion, then the deficit could not stimulate total spending, as Keynes claimed. No crowding out of private business from financial markets would occur either, since the increase in government borrowing would be exactly offset by a rise in private savings flowing into the financial markets.

The use of advanced mathematics to camouflage vacuous ideas is a rhetorical device that has long been appreciated by economists. Barro's formulation, however, is a new breakthrough in this genre. Do a significant number of people really know the size of the Federal government's deficit? Even if they did, could they also accurately calculate the extent of their own future tax liability associated with that deficit? Even if this too were possible, would "rational" people really always want to increase their savings to meet such a liability? Would it not sometimes be more rational, for instance, to purchase a car or home or to pay off outstanding personal debts or even take a vacation?

Though Barro has no plausible answers to these questions, his viewpoint is regarded highly not only by many professional colleagues but increasingly by a broader audience as well. For example, Robert Bartley, editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, recently pronounced himself in his newspaper's editorial page an "unreconstructed supporter" of the Barro line. This should not be surprising, since Barro provides a scientific seal of approval for what has become a major shift in conservative thinking. Once the archfoe of deficit spending, the right has learned through the Reagan tax cuts, military buildup and swelling Federal interest payments flowing to the wealthy that government generosity need hardly be limited to the poor.

Given the dismal state to which mainstream discussion has descended, one eagerly seeks enlightenment from the now-dissident Keynesian tradition. Heilbroner and Bernstein do score some important points. First, they challenge the basic assumption, implicit in the crowding-out argument, that the private sector deserves the first crack at the finite supply of available credit. They argue that government deserves the first claim on funds, since it plays a primary role in promoting economic development and increasing opportunity through capital account spending on education, public infrastructure and the like. The private sector's investment spending, on the other hand, often finances wasteful and harmful activities.

But beyond this, Heilbroner and Bernstein's main contention is that the deficit is not a serious burden on credit markets or the economy in general because, in fact, it is not particularly large when measured properly. Official deficit figures, in their view, represent substantial overstatements, for three reasons: The official deficit takes no account of the surpluses run by state and local governments through their receipt of Federal grants and subsidies; it makes no correction for inflation; and, most important, it does not deduct the self-financing capital account deficits, as is customarily done in business accounting. When these factors are recognized and appropriate subtractions made, the deficit diminishes dramatically. The 1988 net Federal deficit, for example, would fall from $162 billion to $3 billion. "It must now be abundantly clear," they write, "that today's deficit, *by any measure*, is far, far smaller than we think."

To support their view, Heilbroner and Bernstein consider several claims by the crowding-out theorists and like-minded doomsayers who claim that the U.S. economy's large deficits are responsible for the higher interest rates, declining savings and worsening international position of the United States in the 1980s. Heilbroner and Bernstein argue that there is no relationship between deficit size and any of these conditions. They present evidence that other advanced capitalist countries have larger proportionate deficits but also lower interest

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rates, higher savings rates and more competitive international positions. They do not deny that the United States faces major economic difficulties; rather, their point is that the deficit cannot be the cause of these problems because it is too small to have so substantial an impact.

Heilbroner and Bernstein premise their defense of deficits on their alternative accounting methodology, but that framework is simply not strong enough to sustain this heavy burden. They are correct that some deficit spending does indeed finance productive expenditures and therefore should be treated differently from an accounting standpoint (though defining "productive" and "nonproductive" will largely be a matter of one's politics; as David Stockman noted, there is no line in the Federal budget for "fraud, waste and abuse"). But this approach does not explain why declining economic performance has been accompanied by rising deficits. Heilbroner and Bernstein would argue that this connection is illusory, since actual deficits are far smaller than the official figures. However, their accounting adjustments still would not measure the expected impact of deficit spending.

To Keynes, it didn't matter what the government purchased with its deficit funds: The point was to inject spending into the economy, whether by building pyramids, digging holes in the ground or, if possible, enhancing productive capabilities. Thus, a large official deficit that finances productive activities should be expected to generate a great deal of economic activity—at least as much, if not more, than a deficit that finances hole-digging. In other words, following Keynesian logic, we should expect what Heilbroner and Bernstein are calling capital account deficits (the type that finance long-term increases in productivity) to stimulate economic growth immediately. But in fact they do not appear to be doing so. Heilbroner and Bernstein simply sidestep this problem through their accounting argument. Indeed, one notable change since their *Primer* is the extent to which they have drifted away from their earlier emphasis—and Keynes's—on deficit spending as a means of boosting economies that otherwise would sag.

So the basic problem remains: Why aren't the large deficits, regardless of what they are financing, stimulating growth? The answer is not obvious, especially if one is unpersuaded by mainstream economists' free-market homilies.

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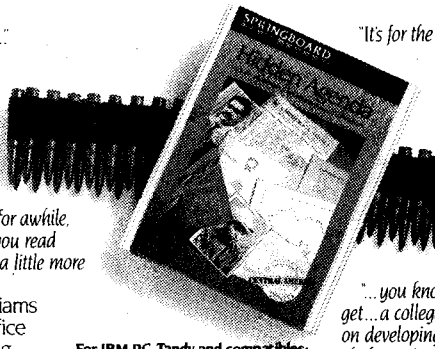

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The first glimmers of understanding would have to begin with the recognition that contemporary capitalist economies, and that of the United States in particular, have experienced major structural problems over the past twenty years (problems about which Heilbroner has written, elsewhere, at length). This is not the place to consider their underlying causes, but we can identify a couple of the most evident and important manifestations of structural change: The decline of real wages and pretax corporate profitability and the increased international integration of the U.S. economy, as seen especially in the persistent U.S. trade deficit.

There are several connections between these changes and the rising Federal deficits. I will consider only two here. First, corporations and households have attempted to compensate for their declining profits and incomes by pushing for lower tax rates. That is, the cuts in tax rates for both corporations and households during the 1970s and especially the 1980s—indeed, the entire taxpayer revolt that Reagan rode into the Presidency—reflected an effort by most groups in the economy to counteract the stagnation of their pretax incomes. Of course, the big beneficiaries of the Reagan tax cuts were the corporations and the wealthy, but the declines in their levies have been substantial enough to reduce significantly government revenues relative to its bills.

A second problem is that both the trade deficit and the trend toward declining profitability have made it more difficult for any deficit to have a positive stimulatory impact. This is most easily grasped in the case of trade. The government runs a deficit with the intention of putting more spending power in the hands of Americans. But because the United States imports significantly more than it exports, a large proportion of U.S. households' new spending power is diverted to other countries. This isn't necessarily bad from an international perspective; but the stimulus to the U.S. economy from a deficit will be weaker.

The immediate effect of declining profitability is to lower capitalists' willingness to invest, since the purpose of investment, after all, is to make profits. Therefore, a given deficit will be less able to lure capitalists to increase their investments than it would if profit expectations were higher. The leveraged buyout vogue has made this problem more acute. Declining profitability has made it more lucrative and less risky for business to trade ownership claims in existing assets—that is, to buy out existing firms—than to invest in the creation of new plant and equipment. Therefore, a government deficit, to the extent that it does anything to stimulate business spending, may only succeed in encouraging leveraged buyouts. When this happens, there will normally be no real stimulus to employment, incomes or investment. Indeed, jobs and wages for workers almost always suffer when the poison pills, greenmail and golden parachutes are divided up among the schemers.

Where does all this lead? Certainly the problems of contemporary U.S. capitalism are real and serious, contrary to the view implied by Barro. Deficit spending is not the basic cause of our economic difficulties, as crowding-out adherents argue. But growing deficits are an important manifestation of our structural problems. They are not mainly an accounting illusion, as Heilbroner and Bernstein contend, however appealing are the political positions they develop from that premise.

Can deficit spending be part of the solution? Surely not so long as the Federal budget continues to be used as a welfare program for the rich and powerful. Heilbroner and Bernstein, to their credit, follow the logic of their accounting framework to propose a substantial shift in the government's spending priorities, out of "nonproductive" military spending and into capital account areas like education and a rebuilt infrastructure. Such proposals of course deserve support, as they would promote both productivity and the common weal. But it should also be clear that such policies will not themselves reverse the economy's long-term structural decline, and along with it, the declining force of deficit spending as a tool for economic stimulus. The search in the United States for an equitable *perestroika* strategy continues. □

The Kid Who Has It

RONALD BAYER

LEARNING BY HEART: AIDS and Schoolchildren in America's Communities. *By David L. Kirp with Steven Epstein, Marlene Strong Franks, Jonathan Simon, Douglas Conaway and John Lewis. Rutgers University Press. 304 pp. $22.95.*

"Viruses don't discriminate," argue those appalled by the base responses evoked by AIDS, primarily against homosexuals and intravenous drug users, since the epidemic emerged into public awareness in mid-1981. That biological truism masks a deeper social truth: Once a virus establishes itself in a given population, its spread is often determined largely by social factors that affect human interactions. Social cleavages thus become part of the natural history of disease. With a virus spread by blood and semen, like the human immunodeficiency virus, the distribution of infection must be shaped by the socially structured patterns of intimacy. Thus the historical accident that HIV first established itself among gay men and intravenous drug users in the United States marked the epidemic's course not only in terms of who would bear the burden of disease and death but of the social reaction it would engender.

That HIV infection was an affliction of gay men, i.v. drug users and their sexual partners, and that it spread as a result of their behavior made it possible for those who feared and detested them to assert that the disease was self-inflicted, that the suffering was deserved. But even those so fixed upon blaming the victims of historical accident could not in conscience blame the children who were infected. They were "innocents" given the virus by blood and blood products before the securing of the nation's blood supply or as a result of the transmission of HIV from infected women to their fetuses. Afflicted children had, therefore, a special status even for the most benighted. The response to such children would thus provide the most basic test of America's capacity for reason and compassion.

The Centers for Disease Control had by the fall of 1985 made clear the consensus of scientists that HIV infection could not be spread through casual contact or even by intimate but nonsexual, non-needle-sharing contact. Thus, there were no grounds for discrimination in the workplace or in school: Both science and justice dictated a common course.

Ronald Bayer is associate professor of public health at Columbia University and author of Private Acts, Social Consequences: AIDS and the Politics of Public Health.

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How has America done by its children in the face of AIDS? That is the question to which David L. Kirp, a professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley, and his collaborators address themselves in *Learning by Heart: AIDS and Schoolchildren in America's Communities*. The book provides carefully crafted descriptions of how nine communities responded to the challenge of whether to admit children with HIV infection—whether symptomatic or not—to school. With an attention to detail more characteristic of journalism than of social science, each of these descriptions could almost stand alone as a short story. As an ensemble they tell a tale of bravery and cowardice, of mean-spiritedness and compassion, of suffering and fortitude.

There is Kokomo, Indiana, where Ryan White was barred from school in a merciless act that won the nation's attention; and Swansea, Massachusetts, where a conservative community responded to Mark Hoyle as one of its own. There is Ocilla, Georgia, in the shadow of the C.D.C. in Atlanta, where an uninfected boy whose mother had AIDS was threatened with exclusion from school unless she would agree to live apart from him; and Wilmette, Illinois, where in the face of fear-mongering by the followers of Lyndon LaRouche a community resisted the pressure for exclusion. There is the story of children howling "AIDS monster" at the home of an infected child and the assertion of one pupil that, if prodded by reporters to reveal the identity of an infected classmate, all should respond, "I'm the kid who has it."

What can account for the differences captured in *Learning by Heart*, for the very different ways parents came to grips with the fear that the presence of a child with AIDS in the classroom would expose their own precious offspring to risk? Time was a critical factor. The risks of transmission were less broadly understood in mid-1985 than in 1987. Yet even during the first school controversies there were some who responded with restraint and compassion. And in the summer of 1987, when not a shred of doubt remained about the extent of the risk, a family in Arcadia, Florida, saw its home burned down because it had sought to enroll infected hemophiliac children in a local school.

As Kirp recounts the stories of the communities it becomes clear that the response to the challenge of AIDS in the schoolroom was shaped by a range of factors, including social class, politics of both the very grand and petty varieties, the role of educational bureaucrats, the intelligence of local physicians and the simple decency of those compelled to face the issue. No easy explanation emerges from this set of stories, only a realization of the complexity of life itself. But one factor does stand out for Kirp, a democrat instinctively distrustful of bureaucratic impositions: When parents, teachers, administrators and physicians confronted AIDS together, talked and listened to one another, expressed their fears and hopes, weighed the evidence provided by medical practitioners with candor, the consequence was often a "transforming experience," one that resulted in community solidarity and compassionate policy. Nevertheless, Kirp is too honest to fail to recognize that the popular will can at times be mean-spirited and irrational. And so, despite his appeal to the spirit of democracy, he is compelled to acknowledge that at times it is necessary to turn to "outsiders" like judges to impose upon narrow-minded communities the demand that they respect the rights of the vulnerable. That much we learned two decades ago in the civil rights struggle.

Although it recounts the drama of schoolchildren, *Learning by Heart* is really an examination of a much broader question posed by AIDS: Will we respond by exclusions, separations, the "lifting of drawbridges," or by acts of solidarity and compassion?

In the first years of the epidemic, when public attention focused largely on gay men—often white and middle-class—there was a deep ambivalence about how best to react. That the moral question posed by AIDS had to be confronted in the absence of moral leadership from the White House made it all the more difficult for this country to find its way. In the next years, as the incidence of HIV infection falls most heavily upon the poor, black and Hispanic i.v. drug users and their sexual partners, the capacity to sustain a sense of solidarity—to support the required investment in scientific research, to expand the resources that will be necessary to care for those who become sick—will be severely strained. A failure of presidential leadership in this phase of the epidemic will represent a continuing abdication of political responsibility, with the toll in human suffering all too easy to foretell. □

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PAUL MATTICK JR.

Roger Norrington's Beethoven

On August 5 and 6 Pepsico brought its ten-year-old Summerfare series at the Purchase campus of the State University of New York to a close with a program of lectures, rehearsals and concerts billed as "The Beethoven Experience." With "The Jimi Hendrix Experience," of course, Jimi was present, and the definite article suggested something analogous here: if not the actual participation of Beethoven, then the next best thing. In a word, *authenticity*. The weekend built to a performance of the Ninth Symphony by Roger Norrington's London Classical Players, using turn-of-the-nineteenth-century-style instruments and historical playing techniques and paying scrupulous attention to Beethoven's own directions for performance, particularly in regard to tempo. What was promised was thus a performance realizing the composer's intentions, at least as defined in terms of what an audience of his time could have expected to hear. The enthusiastic response Norrington and his musicians received from the large crowd in attendance showed that the public is ready to embrace his version of authenticity.

In the past half-year Norrington's recordings of the Beethoven symphonies have become classical music best-sellers—selling, in fact, far better than classical vinyl usually does—and concert series devoted to performance on period instruments do very well. This reflects, to a large extent, the movement of Early Music from its former relatively esoteric medieval, Renaissance and early Baroque territory into the musical mainstream. By now the music of Bach and Handel is widely thought to require old-instrument performance: With Norrington and others forging ahead beyond Beethoven to Berlioz, Mendelssohn and Brahms, competition with the symphonic establishment is more than launched. If "authenticity" is, not surprisingly, meeting with resistance from the players, both musical and critical, of that establishment, The Beethoven Experience, dedicated at once to musical enlightenment and commercial promotion, showed it to be fully embraced by the culture industry.

In fact, as Nicholas Kenyon points out in his introduction to a recent anthology of essays, *Authenticity and Early Music*, "No change has more profoundly influenced the development of our music-making during the last two decades than the growth of the historical performance movement," with its "search for original methods and styles of performance." The very appearance of an audience for this points to a peculiarity of modern musical culture: its devotion to the music of the past. It was only with the eighteenth century that a musical canon made up of works of earlier composers began to come into being. Yet by the later 1800s the performance repertory had shifted decisively from living to dead composers.

This change is connected to the transformation of the relation between composer and consumer of music that came with the emergence of bourgeois society. Instead of being produced by a serving member of a church establishment or aristocratic household to meet the needs of ceremony and entertainment, music, as publication and in performance, became a commodity marketed to a middle-class public. Like painting and sculpture, it was transformed from an accoutrement to noble life into Art, with the concert hall as its museum and the works of the Viennese masters—now termed "classical"—taking the role played by Greco-Roman and Renaissance works in the visual arts. The past figured as a value, a signifier of the social supremacy being seized by the rising bourgeoisie. Classical music became a sign of social advancement, while the music that people listened to, danced to and enjoyed in daily life was allowed frank commercialization as "popular music."

The twentieth century's rediscovery of forgotten music from before 1750 can be seen as a backward displacement of the canon. But as a movement marginal and revisionist in relation to the established canon, it also represented a break with tradition, and indeed it came into existence alongside the musical avant-garde. In the 1960s Early Music blossomed in circles not unlike those that fostered the folk music revival, combining opposition to both the commercialization and the "museumization" of music in a world in which professionals, amateurs and fans mingled freely with one another, and in which participants could freely construct taste rather than receiving it from the academy or the authorities of music appreciation (this aspect, among others, is well discussed in Philip Brett's excellent contribution to *Authenticity and Early Music*).

Both from within and in opposition to this milieu a number of musicians, above all in Holland, Belgium and Britain, asserted the demands of professionalism and virtuosity. Almost irresistibly music history pulled them forward, from the harpsichord to the fortepiano, from Handel to Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, who were thus reborn not as past masters but as innovators and expanders of musical possibility. The excitement of these performers as they gradually explored "new" instruments and techniques and an expanding repertory was palpable, especially by contrast to the predictable, often disinterested and too often sloppy performance of conventional orchestral musicians. The thrill of the new, so basic to twentieth-century artistic aims, came here in a form easier for audiences to take than the difficult music of the avant-garde, especially when the authenticists finally took on symphonic war horses.

At the same time, these players brought with them a sense of the otherness of the music of the past, even that with which we have been long familiar: The call for authenticity was then a call for the recognition and enjoyment of the difference from today's musical assumptions of earlier composers' expectations about instrumental sound, notational conventions and—more broadly—the meanings their works could carry. As the musicologist Gary Tomlinson points out in his very interesting essay in *Authenticity and Early Music*, "Meanings arise from the connections of one signifying act to others. . . . Without context there is no meaning." This sets limits on authenticity, for the meanings we give music of the past must be different from their earlier ones. It also implies that it requires effort to reconstitute the meanings works can be thought of as having had when written and first performed—effort that is necessary if music from the past is to lead us to new meanings rather than simply reflect back those we already have.

The technical differences are serious. In 1954 Thurston Dart, a pioneer of authentic performance, wrote that "few concert-goers probably realize that of all the instruments they hear in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony . . . the only ones whose sounds have not changed since the symphony was first performed in 1824 are

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the kettledrum, the triangle, and the trombone." In fact, even these three have changed their character since the mid-nineteenth century, most audibly the timpani. Work with old instruments arose from the rehabilitation of forgotten repertories that practically required them; in turn, the instruments led players to old treatises on how to play them, and themselves have been a crucial source of suggestions. The lightly built, resonant, gut-strung violin, for instance, makes no demand for the constant vibrato of the modern player, thus freeing vibrato to take its original place as an expressive ornament. The wooden-frame fortepiano allows the performer to work with speeds, pedalings and power forbidden in a number of compositions by the modern piano. That this involves no sacrifice of the thing called "pianism" was demonstrated at Purchase by Melvyn Tan. The richness and variety of tone he drew from his beautiful instrument (a modern copy of the type favored by Beethoven), together with his detailed control of dynamics, should have utterly demolished any idea that the piano was "improved" in the later nineteenth century.

The musical consequences of valuing these differences are clear from a comparison of Norrington's recent recording of the Ninth with Herbert von Karajan's 1977 version, recently reissued on CD. The latter is the top pick (from the approximately forty versions available) of the *Penguin Guide to Compact Discs, Cassettes and LPs*, which we may take as representative of mainstream taste and which recommends it especially for its treatment of the Adagio third movement. Accustomed, after fifteen years of listening to historically oriented performance, to late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century tempi, I find von Karajan's treatment unbearably slow, a vehicle for the expression of a late-Romantic sense of emotionality quite foreign to Beethoven's music.

The lack of interest in Beethoven's intentions extends beyond the disregard of tempo designations (which we know to have been of extreme importance to the composer) to a failure to take the trouble to learn the notational conventions of the time, resulting (for example) in a misdirection of the vocal recitative introducing the "more pleasing and joyful" sounds of the last movement. The sound of the orchestra blends the instrumental choirs together into one lush sound, offering us not a drama in which many voices participate but the overpowering expression of one voice: the conductor's. In contrast, the performance on early instruments, on disc as live at Purchase, has made for a combination of individuality and transparency of sound that brings to vivid life Beethoven's expansion of orchestral color and made possible both balance and clarity even in fortissimo passages. Most basically, by attending both to Beethoven's text and the sound-world to which it related, Norrington allows the listener to try to understand Beethoven's compositional choices, as he himself has attempted to.

This is not to say—as is in fact sometimes said by hostile critics—that "authentic performance" means the sacrifice of the interpreter's musical personality to rules in old treatises. Here one need only compare a few "authentic" performances of the "Eroica," some even involving many of the same players but with different conductors. Christopher Hogwood's reading has the flavor of a run-through, betraying no great depth of feeling or interpretation. At times the effect is invigoratingly brash, at others the musical texture hovers on the edge of disintegration. Norrington's uses his command of dynamics and instrumental color to give a powerful sense of the theatricality of Beethoven's score. And Frans Brüggen's Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century turns in a spectacular live performance in which the shading of line by articulation and subtle rhythmic inflections, wedded with the unity-in-difference of the classical orchestral sound, produces the finest rendition of this masterwork I have heard.

Richard Taruskin, in the longest but tendentious and at times misleading essay in the Kenyon volume, sees a terrible danger in the break with tradition involved in authentic performance. Without "a reaffirmation," in performances like Furtwängler's of Bach, "of the presence of Bach *in* Wagner and . . . of Wagner in Bach. . . . Bach would fall out of the tradition, and so . . . would Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner. All would become alien to all; the centre would cease to hold." In reality, what is so threatening to musical ideology is the reinsertion of the "tradition" into the history from which works of the past were severed to be enshrined as timeless, transcendent "classics." After all, the Beethoven that Wagner heard was still a pretty "authentic" one—Wagner was the first major conductor to believe he should tinker with the score—and indeed the harmonies and instrumental

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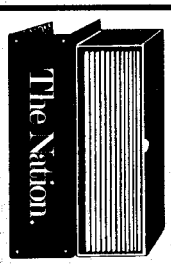

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color of the Adagio of the Ninth, as performed by Norrington's band, gave me the strongest sense I have ever had of what Wagner might have heard in Beethoven. And let us not forget that we are still waiting to hear historically accurate performances of *Wagner's* music.

At any rate, the audience at Purchase seemed to have no trouble adjusting their ears to the sounds produced by the London Classical Players. This adjustment might well have been aided by a degree of confusion present in the lecture part of the program. Even while pointing out the departures from modern tradition in his orchestral practice, Norrington reassured his audience with the traditional discourse of genius and of music as a universal language ("We all want to warm ourselves at the flame of Beethoven's unfettered genius this weekend . . . to share some of those things that are dearest to us all"). And although Hugh Macdonald, professor of music at Washington University, spoke of the need for musicians and listeners to clear away the debris of tradition and listen with early nineteenth-century ears, he also insisted that "the music speaks to us directly," while stressing that "we can't really understand the magic of the Ninth anyway."

As if to prove him wrong, David Cairns, music critic for *The Sunday Times* of London, delivered a guide through the Ninth that I'm sure gave many in the audience a better sense than they had before of this symphony as the exhibition of a comprehensible context rather than a piece of mysterious high culture. And Owen Jander, a professor of music at Wellesley College, in a brilliant bit of teaching, demonstrated how much one can come to understand about a piece of music from the past when presented with a good dose of information about the content of its composition—and an excellent performance, such as the Classical Players and Melvyn Tan gave of Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy." Context remained almost exclusively musical, however; missing throughout the weekend was any serious discussion of the social and political aspects of the work being celebrated.

David Levy's lecture, "The Ninth and Its Audience," cited the first critics of Beethoven's work but told us nothing about the actual audience—about the changing nature of concerts and their role in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century social life. In an interesting talk, the art historian Alessandra Comini touched on the political uses made of Beethoven's image after his death. But on the significance of the hymn to *fraternité* with which Beethoven chose to end his work, and on the relationship to the upheavals of his time of Beethoven's lifelong themes of the individual's heroic struggle against social fate and a wished-for reconciliation of the classes, no one had much to offer. Macdonald contributed to the current vogue for celebrating the bicentennial of the French Revolution by denouncing it: "The French Revolution didn't have much to do with fraternity at all; Beethoven in his deluded way went on thinking it did." And his summary of the significance of the Ninth's last movement was eloquent: The setting of Schiller's poem can no longer be taken to mean that we should all be brothers—and sisters, one wants to add—"but that one piece of music is better than any other." Politics, so basic to Beethoven's thinking, intruded only in the form of teamsters seeking class harmony in their own way with a handout calling for both future funding of Summerfare and a long-delayed wage increase for Pepsico workers.

Thus, ultimately, The Beethoven Experience remained authentically of our time. It provided a beautiful restoration of a great work of art, stripping it of a century's encrusted interpretational varnish and showing it in a brilliant light, with useful wall labels, without questioning the separation of the domain of art from the rest of life. At the same time, the eager response of the audience to Norrington's (and others') disclosures of the humorous and vulgar character of key moments in the Ninth manifested the current tendency, in all cultural spheres, toward the devaluation of art. Their laughter and applause showed pleasure in hearing that culture is not always so much "higher" than the everyday. There was an undeniably progressive aspect to this, that of the desanctification of art. What was missing was any sense of an alternative context in which art of the past, present or future could be put. In the creation of this, exploration of the social ideals embodied in Beethoven's late Enlightenment masterwork could only help. Meanwhile, we are left with the music. Played very well, to an audience primed to understand it in a way few audiences have a chance to be, it proved its capacity still to reach from one end of the bourgeois era to the other and thrill us with the terrors and the promise of modernity. □

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	O	F	F	A	N	D	R	U	N	N	I	N	G	
S		A		R		Y		N		E		U		L
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U				A		T		K		E		M		
C	U	S	P	I	D		D	E	C	A	D	E	N	T
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S	A	G	A	C	I	T	Y		E	D	I	T	O	R
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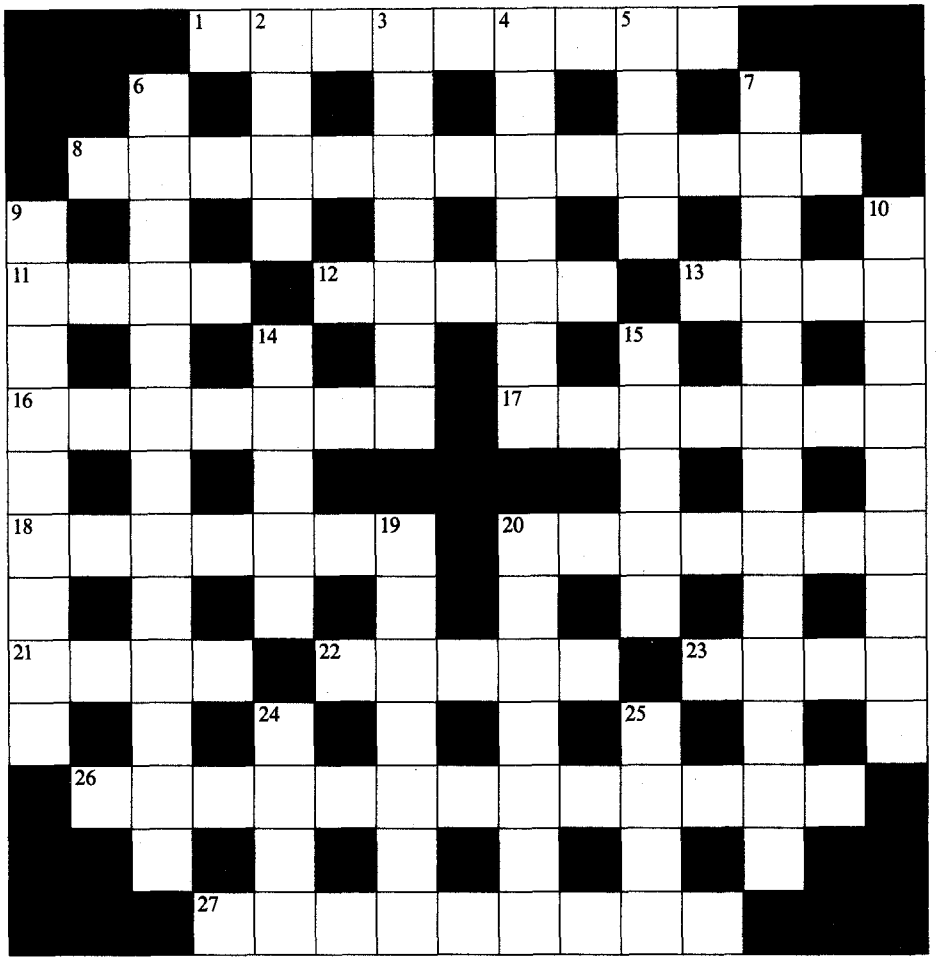
Crossword Puzzle No. 2257

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Alter rude version for the type getting much TV coverage this past year, both in politics and religion. (9)
8 He blew his little whistle, as the kids know, as a way to keep the boss posted. (13)
11, 13 and 22 Burn on time, with what lasts longest in the burning—as the first one to sign up. (7,6)
12 and 4 down Take stock of the royal robes, as the sapper does the sapper. (12)
13 See 11
16 Wrote in the books "Came in!" (7)
17 The last sort a revolutionary put in might carry quite a bit. (7)
18 Not exactly unclear as a policy we should be concerned about. (7)
20 The taxi I catch should really be for a bunch of secretaries. (7)
21 Great on L.I., but little as a quahog! (4)
22 See 11
23 A call to a friend that might be "Fire!" (4)
26 Twenty-five on a baseball team follows as punishment. (3-1-4-5)
27 What one says is its reason, possibly. (9)

DOWN

2, 14 and 24 Where some kill time at the airport proves a charged task, and lets go with what a bunny does. (4-4,5)
3 A confused Pole, and ancient king or emperor. (7)
4 See 12 across
5 And in France it gets around like the Orient. (4)
6 One of the main names in geography, associated by some with a cross-connection. (8,5)
7 Call someone such as Paderewski—one that has to hold the line (9,4)
9 Showing the picture of refinement? (8)
10 Liliputian dialect causing rhubarb, for example, around the shopping center. (It really isn't important!) (5,4)
14 See 2
15 Unconsidered ventures that brought down Caesar. (5)
19 Otherwise coming up to "Down East" you'll get nothing but lettuce! (7)
20 Such nice weather to see the Pope! (7)
24 See 2
25 Felix has nothing on the statesman, it seems! (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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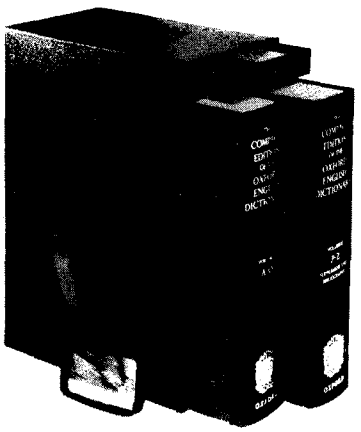

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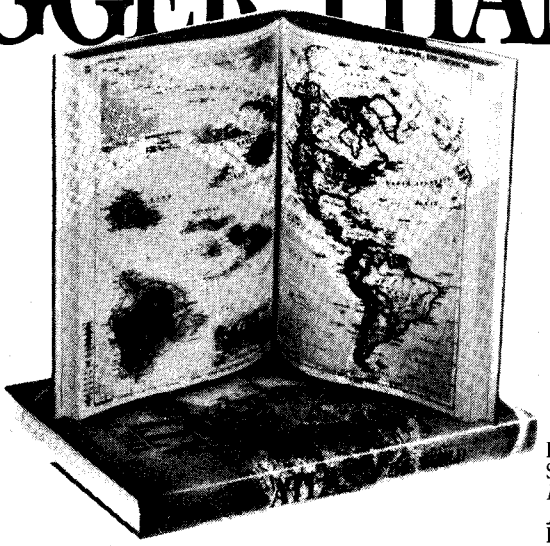

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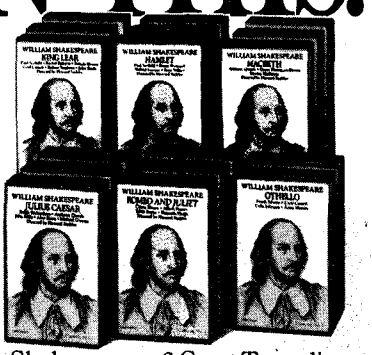

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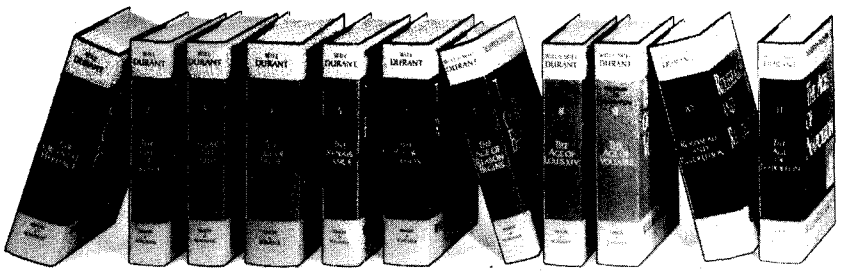

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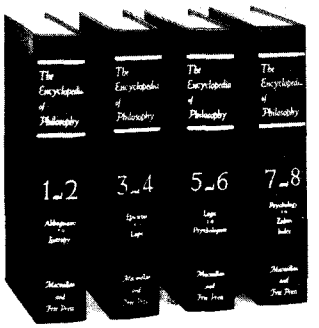

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